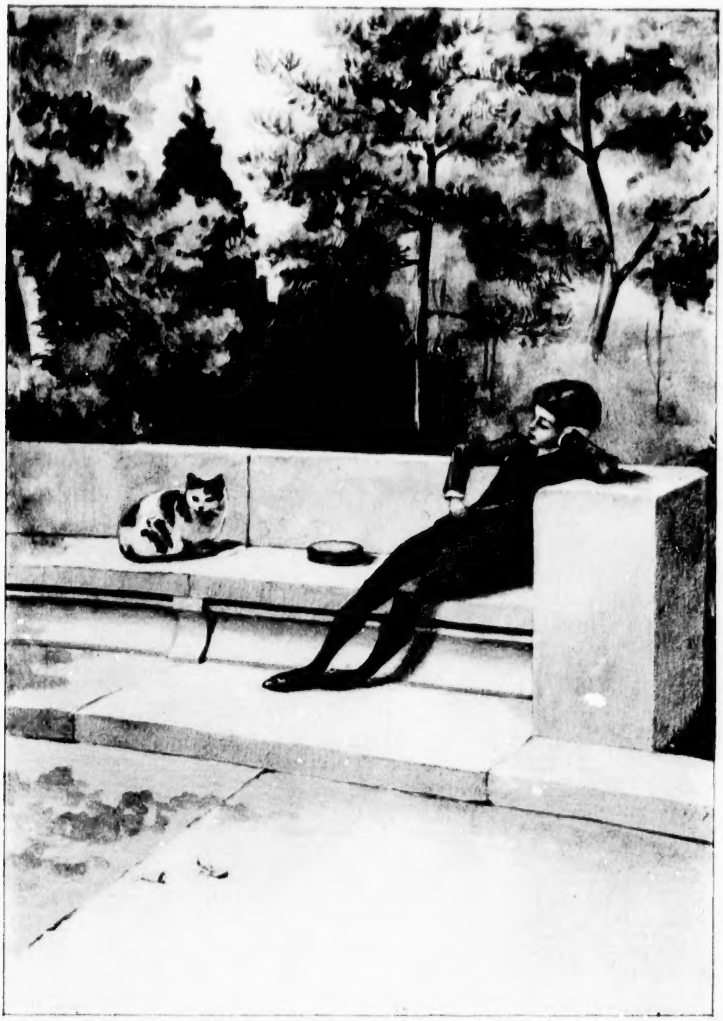

Eugene and King Boozy.

NOTES FROM THE PARK

BY

SANDERS,

AUTHOR OF "[illegible] AND [illegible]," "[illegible]," ETC.

PHILADELPHIA:

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[illegible]

THE

KING OF THE PARK

BY

MARSHALL SAUNDERS,

AUTHOR OF "BEAUTIFUL JOE," "CHARLES AND HIS LAMB,"
"FOR THE OTHER BOY'S SAKE," ETC.

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I Inscribe This Book

TO

POLICE-SERGEANT CHARLES WESLEY HEBARD

OF THE BACK BAY FENS, AND HIS HUMANE ASSOCIATES,

TO

MRS. HEBARD,

HIS KIND-HEARTED WIFE, AND TO THE PARENTS OF THE DEAR GIRLS AND BOYS WHO PLAY ABOUT THE HOME OF THE WELL-KNOWN KING OF THE PARK.

Marshall Saunders.

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THE KING OF THE PARK.

CHAPTER I.

LONG LIVE THE EMPEROR.

POLICE SERGEANT HARDY stood near the Boylston Street entrance to the Fens, his back toward the hundred and fifteen acres of park land which it was his duty to guard, his good-natured face overspread by a smile, as he watched a young lady taking a bicycle lesson in a secluded walk on his left.

The young lady approached the machine held by her instructor as if it were a horse, then springing nimbly on it, her features became rigid with anxiety as she found that her steed would neither go on nor stand still.

Her heroic grapplings and wrestlings with it, her wild gyrations to and fro in the walk, while her teacher dashed madly after her, were

so ludicrous that the sergeant, although he was well used to such spectacles, was obliged to turn away to conceal the broad grin that overspread his countenance.

The next object of his attention was a Gordon setter who was gayly trotting into the park, but who, on catching the sergeant's eye, at once changed his happy-go-lucky demeanor for a guilty shambling gait.

"What are you doing here, Mr. Ormistead's dog?" said the sergeant in a stern voice, as he glanced at the animal's collar. "Where's your escort?"

The setter immediately prostrated himself on the ground, but his humble attitude was belied by the roguish don't-care expression of the eyes he rolled up at the guardian of the law.

The sergeant waved his hand at him. "Get home with you. You know you can't run loose here. What would the ducks and the cats say to you; or rather, what would you say to them?"

The dog was not ready to give in. He extended the tip of a very pink tongue, and

meekly licked the tip of the sergeant's shiny boot.

"No nonsense now," said the man firmly. "You can't humbug me, and you understand that as well as a Christian. Run home with you."

The dog sprang up, resumed his careless air, and trotted calmly from the park by the roadway through which he had come.

The sergeant sauntered on. It was a charming September morning. He met a few pedestrians and many nurses and children. It was yet rather early in the day for the carriage people to be out.

A succession of angry childish shrieks made him suddenly wheel round, and look in the direction from which he had come. Two nurses and two children stood by the stone seats near the group of bronze figures erected to the memory of John Boyle O'Reilly.

The sergeant strolled slowly back to them. One of the nurses bent over a little girl who was sobbing violently, and was stamping her foot at a foreign-looking lad with a pale face,

who stood at a little distance from her. His nurse, or attendant, for he was rather too old a child to come entirely under a nursery *régime*, supported him by her presence, and would have taken his hand in hers if he had not drawn it from her.

"And sure you've hurt her this time with your murderin' Frenchy temper," exclaimed the little girl's nurse, looking away from her sobbing charge at the silent boy. "It's a batein' you ought to have. Come now, tell us what you were after a-doing to her?"

"He took me by the arm and the leg, and he sweeped the ground with me," cried the little girl peeping at him from between her fingers.

"Och, the young villain," interrupted her nurse, "and did you?"

The boy shrugged his shoulders. "Yes, it is true; but afterwards I embraced her."

"By the soul of love, but you're the queer boy," responded the nurse warmly; "and it's the likes of you makes the men that thinks they can drag us women round the earth by

the hair of our heads, and then make it up with a — I'm sorry for ye, me dear — Bad luck to ye."

"Hush now, Bridget," interposed the second nurse, stepping nearer the boy. "Wait till you hear the rights of this. Tell us now, Master Eugene, what did Virgie do to you?"

The boy's eyes flashed; but he said quietly enough, "Would you have me a talebearer? What would my grandfather say? Ask the child" — and he pointed to the still sobbing Virgie with as grand an air as if he were really the man that he felt himself to be.

"He h-h-hurt my pealings," wailed Virgie dismally.

"Your pealings; it's feelings you mean, rose of my heart," said her nurse, drawing the child nearer to her. "Tell your good Bridget what you did to the naughty boy."

The little girl, for some reason or other, was shy about confessing the provocation that she had given her playmate; but her nurse, whose curiosity had been aroused, was determined to extract a confession from her, and adroitly

made use of the presence of the sergeant, who had by this time arrived on the scene.

"See, lovie dove," she murmured in the child's ear, "here's a great big monster of a policeman, and he's looking at ye. Tell him sharp."

The little girl shuddered, hid her face in her nurse's breast, and whispered, "I 'sulted his remperor."

"And you served him right," said Bridget. "The grasping old frog-eater. If I had a child that worshipped his bones, it's shutting him up in prison I'd be after doing till he learned better sense," and she made a vindictive gesture in Eugene's direction.

Her nurse's championship restored courage to the breast of the little girl; and slipping from her knee, she jumped nimbly to the stone seat beside them, and stretched out both her tiny hands toward the noble head carved above her.

"I 'sulted him," she cried, tossing back her curls from her flushed rosy cheeks. "I made a face at him like this," and she screwed up

her little visage in a detestable grimace, "and I said, 'Eugene, I hate your old remperor;' then he sweeped me over the ground."

A slight flush overspread the boy's pale face, but he did not deny the accusation.

"Well, now, Virgie Manning," said the boy's nurse in a severe manner, "that was real mean in you. You're only a little girl, but you ought to be ashamed of yourself to taunt a little boy that sets such store by his emperor. Look at here, officer," and she appealed to the sergeant; "you've often seen us in these Fens. This little boy," and she pointed to Eugene, "is French, and he's got such a love for foreign things that you can't get it out of him. He justs worships the emperor. I don't rightly know which one it was" —

"His majesty, the great Napoleon, the greatest emperor the world has ever seen," murmured the boy, lifting his cap with an indescribable mingling of reverence and grace.

"He hasn't any brothers or sisters or father or mother," continued the nurse, "and his grandfather's nearly always away; and ever

since he was a little fellow he tells me he's been used to taking his meals with the picture of this emperor propped against the sugar-bowl; and he declares that this statoo, or figger, or whatever you call it, is like the photograph, and he just worships it; and if he sees any one leaning against this slab, or throwing stones near it, it just makes him crazy: and Virgie knows it, and she does it to tease him; and it ain't his fault if he struck her or whatever he did," and the girl threw a glance of defiance at the other nurse.

The sergeant smiled amiably. Among his multifarious duties he was quite well accustomed to being called on to act as arbiter in disputes between young nursery-maids or between their charges; and being somewhat of a philosopher, he was well adapted for the office.

The first thing he usually did was to give the parties engaged in controversy time to get cool while he went off on a side issue; so he said, in a deliberate fashion, "According to my humble opinion, if I was called upon suddenly for it, I should say that there isn't much re-

semblance between John Boyle O'Reilly and the great Bonaparte. In the first place, O'Reilly never used a razor on his upper lip; and I guess the great Bonaparte did, judging by his pictures. How do you get over that, son?" and he directed his attention to the small boy in a paternal way.

Eugene looked up adoringly at the silent face above them, and spoke in a choking voice. "I have talked over the affair with Monsieur my grandfather. He agrees with me that there is a slight resemblance. Perhaps after the noble martyr went to St. Helena he was not allowed the use of a razor. Those abominable English" —

His utterance failed him to such a degree that the sergeant stared curiously at him. Was it possible that this small boy was shaken with emotion over the sufferings of the ambitious and despotic arbiter of men's destinies who was so long since dead?

Yes, it was — the boy was in earnest.

"Do you believe in my emperor?" he asked, turning seriously to the sergeant.

"Well, I don't know," said the officer dryly. "I owe my allegiance, as I suppose you'd call it, to our President, to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and to the great American Union. However, I can say I believe in Napoleon to this extent — I believe he lived."

"If you insult him," said the boy gravely, "you are my enemy. I worship him. Long live the emperor — his memory will never die;" and his lips moved softly while he again lifted his little cap from his head.

The sergeant said nothing, but glanced at the two nurses, who had forgotten their dispute and were chatting amiably.

"Come, Master Eugene," said his nurse, "we must be going."

The sergeant stepped back; and the little girl, who had been jealously watching him while he talked to Eugene, took his place.

"I'm sorry I made naughty faces at your remperor," she said poutingly. "Kiss me, Eugene."

The boy did not kiss her, and he made no apologies for his own conduct. "I pardon you,"

he said calmly; and he dropped the pink fingers that she extended to him. "Will you have the kindness to promenade with your nurse? I wish to talk to this gentleman — if I am permitted;" and he turned to the sergeant, who was furiously gnawing his mustache to keep from laughing at the boy's grown-up air.

The two nurses and the little girl strolled on ahead, while the sergeant and the boy followed them.

Eugene had recovered his composure. "What admirable weather," he said, dreamily watching the fleecy clouds floating across the blue sky. "I am glad that my grandfather says I am to stay out-of-doors all the time, and not go to school."

"Doesn't your grandfather believe in schools?" asked the sergeant.

"No, Mr. Officer, not in the kind you have here," said the boy wearily. "This is what it was like — I had my breakfast, and went to a hot room where boys and girls sat in rows. I bent over books for an hour or two, then there was a play-time for a few minutes only,

after it more study until lunch-time. A few hurried mouthfuls of food I got at home, then I was running back to the school. By half-past three I was too languid to play, and would try to get my lessons for the next day. My head would ache, and I would go to bed. I tell you," and the boy confronted his companion in sudden passion, "your schools are infamous. They should be abolished. I wish I were an emperor, or your Mr. President. I would guillotine the school-teachers."

"You're an odd one," muttered the sergeant to himself, as he cast a side glance at the slim, elegant figure of the boy beside him. "With your flashes of anger, and your quiet dull way like an old man, you're like a queer combination lock. It isn't every one that can pick you open."

Aloud he said, "This is a free country, my boy; yet I fear you'll get yourself into trouble some day if you keep up your little amusement of sweeping up the ground with girls, and if you propose to kill off our teachers. Why, they're the staff of the nation."

"What I say may sound harsh for the instant," said the boy mildly, "but reflect for a little. Is it not better for a few to suffer than for many? Your schools must kill thousands of children. If a few teachers were sacrificed, many boys would be saved for military duty. Otherwise they will waste their strength in this imbecile of a life, or die, as I say."

"How do you suppose the teachers would feel to be killed off?" asked the sergeant, his broad shoulders shaking with laughter.

Eugene made a compassionate gesture. "It would not be pleasant for them. Perhaps one could alter the punishment to banishment for life."

"Why not allow them to stay at home, if they promise to stop teaching, or to use shorter hours?"

"Because a teacher will always teach, even as women and priests will always intrigue," said Eugene firmly. "My grandfather says so."

The sergeant turned his puzzled face up to the poplars overhead. "I've seen a good many boys and girls in my time, young Frenchman,"

he observed slowly, "but I'm blest if I ever saw one with such twisted ideas as you've got. Why, you ought to be made over again. Is it your grandfather who has brought you up?"

"Yes, Mr. Officer."

"Who is he, anyway?"

"He is called Monsieur le Comte Eugène Claude Louis Hernando de Vargas, formerly seigneur of the château of Châtillon-sur-Loir in the department of Loir-et-Cher in France; and he is descended from the Spaniard Hernando de Vargas, who was ennobled and made a marshal of France by the great Napoleon."

"Oh!" said the sergeant, "I see why you're so stuffy; and where does your grandfather live in this democratic city of Boston?"

"Yonder," said the boy, with a wave of his hand toward the south. "We have but small quarters. My grandfather is embarrassed in his affairs. I may tell you as an official, though I would never tell the schoolboys, that he was sentenced to banishment for conspiring against the abominable so-called republic of France."

"Abominable and republic," repeated the

sergeant remonstratingly; "come, boy, that's not grateful. Do you forget that a republican flag is waving over you at this present moment?"

"For you it is well," said the boy earnestly. "You are true to the past. You defied England, who would have made slaves of you. Also, you have had no emperor."

"Did you ever hear of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln?" asked the sergeant.

"The names of those gentlemen are quite unknown to me," said Eugene politely.

"You don't mean to say that you have never heard of that wonderful hatchet?"

"Whose hatchet, Mr. Officer?"

"George Washington's."

"A hatchet is a kind of sword, is it not?"

"Oh, no, no, — it is a chopper; we cut up wood and meat and anything with it. You've heard that story surely."

"Possibly, sir," said Eugene indifferently. "I do not remember that I have."

"Well, I'm dumb," said the sergeant. "I didn't think there was a child in the length

and breadth of America that hadn't heard about that hatchet. Can you tell a lie, then, as you don't know about George Washington?"

"In general," said Eugene, in his grave, old-fashioned way, "I do not tell lies. At times, if I consider one better than the truth, I tell it without scruple."

"You don't think it's wrong to lie?"

"No, sir; truth is often tiresome; there is tedium in it, my grandfather says. The great emperor lied."

"I'll bet anything on that," said the sergeant grimly, "and he didn't get any good by it either, nor will you, my boy; but of that more anon, as Shakespeare says. I'll have to talk to you some time about those two gentlemen, as you call them, that you don't know about. Would you like me to do so?"

"Yes, sir; I should be charmed."

"I'll back up Washington and Lincoln against all the emperors that ever lived," said the sergeant. "There, now, don't get huffy."

"I am not vexed," said Eugene quietly. "I

am only about to ask you if you can tell me the name of the first king of France."

The sergeant knitted his brows. "Louis, wasn't it?"

"No, Mr. Officer, it was Clovis. Can you tell me why Saint Louis gained his name?"

"No," said the sergeant gruffly; "I'm not up in French history."

"Have you ever heard of the fight at the circus between Pepin the Little and the beasts?" asked Eugene softly and mischievously.

The sergeant laughed good-naturedly. "You've caught me, small boy. I don't know any more of French history than you do of American. We'll cry quits. What street did you say you lived on?"

"Lovejoy Street, number 29, suite 4—you will not proceed against my grandfather?"

"No, indeed; I just want to know where you live. I thought by the way you talk your grandfather must have a mansion on Commonwealth Avenue, at least."

"No, he has not; but the little girl who insulted my emperor lives there."

"Do you ever go to her house?"

"No," said the boy carelessly. "Our nurses are friends, and we promenade together. I do not care for girls. I like men. May I count you as one of my friends, sir?" and stopping himself quickly by sticking the heels of his shoes in the ground, he made the sergeant a low bow.

"I'm sure I'll be delighted," said the sergeant, grinning at him.

"And may I request the honor of your name," pursued the boy. "My grandfather will ask me" —

"Stephen Hardy, at your service, sir — plain Stephen Hardy, no marshals nor lords, not even a captain in my string — only plain Yankee sailors for grandfathers."

"Ah, you belong to the *bourgeoisie*," said Eugene, "or possibly the *peuple*. I should be more pleased if you had the *particule* before your name. De Hardy would be better. However, in this country one must let that pass. You are, nevertheless, not a peasant. One can see that by your bearing."

"What's your grandfather's business?" asked the sergeant bluntly.

The boy blushed a furious crimson. "In this country he has no friends, no influence, his property was taken away — at present he assists a countryman in" —

"In teaching French?" asked the sergeant kindly.

"No; we speak but few words of French," said the boy, and he looked as if another one of his fits of passion were about to come upon him. "We use your language in order that we may not be laughed at, as the boys laugh at me when I speak French."

"How long have you been in this country?" asked the sergeant.

"Six months, Mr. Officer."

"Then you've got a pretty remarkable hold of English for that time."

"But I had an English nurse when I was a child, and an English tutor later on. It was the custom among the *noblesse*."

"And what does your grandfather do?" asked the sergeant, coming back to his original question with true Yankee pertinacity.

"Pardon me, sir — I will tell you another day," said the boy irritably. "The words stick in my throat. I have the honor to wish you good-morning;" and with another one of his sweeping bows, he swiftly and gracefully left the sergeant, and hurried after the two nurses and the little girl, who were making their way toward the wide expanse of meadows and shrub-planted slopes at the farther end of the Fens.

The sergeant stared after Eugene, and talked aloud to himself, as he had a habit of doing. "I don't rightly make out that lad yet. We haven't got any like him in this country. Haughty isn't the word for him, and selfish doesn't come anywhere near his looking out for number one; yet there's something diverting about the little shaver, in spite of it all. He's old-fashioned, like a child that's been brought up with elderly people. I'll look out for him. He'll be coming here again," and the sergeant smiled to himself as he went on his rounds through the park.

CHAPTER II.

KING BOOZY.

THE next morning, while Sergeant Hardy was standing near the main entrance to the Fens on Commonwealth Avenue, he was glad to see in the distance the figures of the two nurses and their two charges.

Eugene, holding himself as straight as a dart, was a little in advance of the others; while Virgie frisked around him, first on one side and then on the other, and occasionally paused to throw back a few words to the nurses, whose heads were nodding in busy conversation.

The sergeant was glad to see that Eugene looked happier than he had done the day before. Indeed, he was comparatively cheerful this morning; and when he got near the sergeant, his cap came off his head in a twinkling, and he said gayly, "Good-morning, sir."

"Bong zhoor, musso," said the sergeant, in

rather indifferent French. "You look as pleased as if you'd got a freedom suit."

Eugene's curiosity was piqued. "Will you explain, sir?" he said prettily. "You mention a phrase that I have never met before."

"Well," said the sergeant, planting himself in the middle of the pavement, while the nurses and the children stood round him in respectful attention, "long ago, when I was a young man, I lived in the country. Every lad, when he was twenty-one, used to get a suit of new clothes, a dress-suit and a tall hat, which he called a freedom suit. This suit was kept for special occasions, like going to church, and funerals, and weddings, and making calls on our lady friends. I can just see the young fellows riding in from the farms on horseback, proud as Punch, with their coat-tails tucked in their pockets to keep them clean."

"How droll!" said Eugene.

"How droll!" little Virgie repeated after him.

will walk with you, sir," said the boy,
the sergeant turned in the direction of

the park. "And I will walk wif you," lisped Virgie to Eugene, attempting to take his hand.

"Not so," he said decidedly; and he held both hands before him. "It might occur to you to seize these flowers which I am carrying, especially as they are for the emperor."

The sergeant's eyes wandered curiously from the tiny bunch of violets to the plain, almost threadbare, suit of clothes that the boy wore. Something told him that Eugene's scanty savings were heroically devoted to perpetuating the memory of his beloved emperor.

"Are you going to lay those before John Boyle O'Reilly," he asked.

Eugene bowed gravely.

"Speaking of monuments, there is one I admire," said the sergeant, jerking a thumb over his shoulder; "and I often think it shows that a woman knows better how to dress a man than a man does."

"You have reason," said Eugene courteously; though he did not understand in the least what the sergeant meant, and the sergeant knew he did not.

"Look at it," said the man to his young companion; and then they both turned around.

Against the blue sky rose alert and graceful the bronze figure of Leif Ericsson, the Norse discoverer of America. One hand he held to his forehead. He was peering forward, as if his eager eyes were anxious to discover the wonders of the new world.

"Yes," said the sergeant, "it is a woman that made that, and to my mind she made a man. I get tired of these heroes in petticoats, sitting round on monuments. I never saw a man in petticoats in my life, except a Christian brother; yet when any one of our famous men is going to be put up in stone for us to admire, the sculptor swaddles him round like a baby in long clothes; though Boston isn't as bad in this respect as some of our cities."

"It is a thousand pities," said Eugene absently.

"Why don't you leave those flowers with Leif?" asked the sergeant jokingly.

Eugene immediately awaked out of his revery. "No, no," he said; and he hurried on

"Let Me put Them up for You," said the Sergeant.

with a disturbed face, and scarcely spoke until they reached the bronze monument.

"Let me put them up for you," said the sergeant, when Eugene stood on tiptoe, and tried to toss his violets near O'Reilly's face.

The boy gave them up, and anxiously watched him as he deposited them on the stone ledge on which the bust rested.

"I wish O'Reilly could see you," said the sergeant. "Perhaps he does. He was a patriot, and I guess he would approve of your devotion to your country."

Eugene stood gazing up in rapt attention until Virgie and the two nurses arrived; then he sighed, and brought his eyes to the earth again.

"I fought you'd runned away and hid yoursef," said little Virgie, shaking her curls and dancing up to Eugene. "Come play wif me; I'm all lonesome."

Eugene was about yielding passively to her request, when he caught sight of a little head peering at him from the underbrush near by.

"Ah, Jacobin!" he said calmly, as he stooped and seized a stone, "away with thee."

The stone was not thrown; for the sergeant stepped forward, and seized him by the shoulder. "What do you see, boy?" he asked.

"A cat," replied Eugene.

The sergeant retained his hold of Eugene, and sat him down on the stone seat. "Boy," he said firmly, "do you stone cats?"

"Always," returned Eugene. "The reptiles!"

"Why do you do it?"

"Possibly," said the lad with slight sarcasm, "you would also stone them if you lived where we do. At night my grandfather retires worn out by his exertions during the day. He sleeps; then he springs from his bed, awakened by a cry for help from a drowning child. It is a cat! He becomes angry; he lifts the window, and throws a morsel of coal at the supposed drowning one. He again retires. He again sleeps. This time a woman shrieks from a burning house. He again hurls himself from the bed. Once more it is but a cat. He throws two morsels of coal, and ensconces himself between the blankets. In succession he is

aroused by murderers, by burglars, by a chorus of men's voices, by a famous *prima donna*, and all is produced by those wretches of cats. He says that he has travelled in many lands, and that he has heard the voices of many cats: but for maliciousness and range of tones these Boston cats eclipse all others."

"I wonder what your grandfather takes for supper," said the sergeant sternly. "A man that runs down cats and women and priests ain't fit to live, in my estimation."

Eugene promptly raised a little cane that he carried under his arm, and struck the sergeant a smart blow across his legs.

The sergeant in his amazement released his hold of Eugene's shoulder; and his nurse, stepping forward with a dismayed face, interposed herself between the angry lad and his powerful opponent, and said, "Run, Master Eugene, run."

"I will not run," said the boy haughtily. "You, sir," he went on, addressing the sergeant, "shall give me satisfaction for this some day. I challenge you to fight a duel with me."

All the annoyance died out of the sergeant's face. "You young swaggerer," he said with a short laugh, "you've got a hard row to hoe in this life. I'm sorry for you; but I guess I'd no business to run down your grandfather. Come over here now; I want to show you something. You come too," he added, addressing the nurses and little Virgie, who had timidly retreated when Eugene began to get angry.

Eugene somewhat sulkily accepted his apology, and they all followed him; while the sergeant talked to them over his shoulder, and led the way to a path near the Boylston-street bridge.

"Speaking of cats," he said, "I want to introduce you to one who is a prince, or rather a king, among them, and perhaps you won't have quite such a low opinion of the gentry. Stoop your heads now; the shrubbery is pretty dense here."

The two nurses and the children gazed admiringly before them. They were facing a most snug retreat.

"And sure, a fox might be happy there, if it wasn't for the highway near by," said Bridget enthusiastically. "And what's the baste that lives in this little wild wood home, officer?"

The sergeant was holding back some branches so that they might see more plainly a tiny wooden kennel heaped high with dead leaves.

"It's a king that lives here," he said; and he lifted toward his auditors his face that was red from stooping over the kennel.

"You didn't know, French boy," and he addressed Eugene, "that there was a sovereign over all this park land that rules as absolutely as your emperor did."

"Is it possible that you speak of a cat?" said the boy contemptuously.

"Of nothing more nor less, of King Boozy, monarch of this park, because he has got character enough to rule over the other twenty cats that live here."

Little Virgie was charmed. Before Eugene could reply, she dropped on her hands and knees, and crawled in beside the sergeant. "Oh, the little sweet housie!" she cried, pat-

ting the tiny dwelling with both hands. "Who made it, mister? does the pussy sleep in it?"

"Yes, little one," said the sergeant. "A gentleman connected with one of the Boston theatres had this kennel made for the king of the park, who always sleeps in it. His chum occupies that barrel over there."

"And is it another cat that is his chum?" asked Bridget.

"Yes," replied the sergeant. "There is only one cat in the park that the king will have to live with him; and that is his chum, Squirrel, and he has to mind his *p's* and *q's*, I tell you, or Boozy would put him out. What do you think of this for a cat's home, young sir?" and he addressed Eugene.

The boy backed out from the underbrush, slightly curling his lip as he did so. "I do not admire the name of the animal," he said coldly; "and why take all that trouble for a cat?"

The sergeant mopped his perspiring face with his handkerchief. "I will talk to you

a little about the king," he said, "and then perhaps you will see."

The path upon which they had entered ran along by the low stone parapet of the Boylston-street bridge. The sergeant took his station against the parapet, while his listeners stood grouped about him in the mild sunshine.

"I believe," said the sergeant, pointing up to the bright blue sky above them, "in an almighty Ruler of the universe that creates all things, — men and women and horses and dogs and cats."

"And so do I," murmured Bridget, crossing herself. "Praise be to his holy name."

"And I believe," continued the sergeant, "that this almighty Ruler does not despise anything that he has made — not even a cat."

Eugene smiled a little ironically, but said nothing.

"Four years ago," went on the sergeant, "I was on duty in this park early one fine summer morning. Down there near Commonwealth Avenue I saw a black-and-white cat

coming leisurely toward me. Every few steps he took he would look over his shoulder in the direction of the houses, then he would walk toward the park again. I have always been fond of cats; so I said 'Good-morning' to him as polite as you please. 'Meow,' he said; and he looked pitifully up at me. 'What's the matter?' I asked. 'Are you going to the park to catch a mouse for yourself this fine morning?' 'Meow, meow,' he said; and he meant, 'No, no,' just as plain as a creature could say it. Then he turned, and walked back in the direction he had come, looking over his shoulder, and begging me to follow as plain as possible. I thought I would go, for I knew something was wrong; and do you know that cat took me as straight as a child would have done down to a fine shut-up house. I suspected what was the matter; however, I rang the bell of the next house, and inquired."

"They had gone away and left the cat, hadn't they?" interjected Eugene's nurse.

"Yes," said the sergeant grimly. "That's

the figure of it. Mrs. Grandlady, whose name you might know if I mentioned it, had taken herself and her dear children and her dear horses to the country; but the dear cat was left to shift for himself. I was sorry for the creature. He went up on the front steps. He went up on the back ones. He listened, he pricked up his ears. He stared at me as if to say, 'Do you really think they have left me?' And when I left him he cried. For three weeks that cat hung about the house listening for some one to come back. I got the lady's address, and wrote to her, but she didn't answer; then I reasoned with the cat, and said, 'You had better come up to the park.' Finally he came. I never saw such a human-like creature. He'd never been ill-used, and he could not seem to understand that any one would hurt him. He has got over that now all right. Dogs chase him, and boys stone him, and he's a different cat. He is shy of strangers, and I don't think he would go back to his old mistress if she came for him."

"Isn't he a good pussy now?" asked Virgie.

"Oh, yes!" said the sergeant, smiling; "he is good, but he is a little sharper than he used to be. He has got to know the world; and he believes that might is right, and he lords it over the other cats in the park. He thinks every one is down on him but me. He has lost faith in human nature — you will understand that when you get to be a big girl."

"I would like to see that pussy," said Virgie wistfully.

"I'll call him up," said the sergeant, "if your nurses will stand back. He hates women."

"Och, the old rascal!" said Bridget wrathfully.

"You see, it's this way," and the sergeant spoke in an apologetic tone of voice. "Probably he was the kitchen cat and the cook's pet, because he isn't a fancy breed like those parlor cats. When the cook cast him off he lost his liking for women."

"I don't want to see the old turncoat," said Bridget disdainfully. "Come on, Virtue Ann;" and she twitched herself to a little distance, leaving the two children with the sergeant.

"You want to see the king, don't you?" the sergeant asked Eugene pointedly.

The boy had been listening in a half-hearted way; but at this question he roused himself and said, "Certainly, sir."

The sergeant gave a long, low whistle; and presently there was a rustling heard behind them, and a prosperous-looking white cat spotted with black came, yawning and stretching himself, through the underbrush.

"Good-morning, Boozy," said the sergeant, as the animal, with the appearance of the greatest delight, sprang on the parapet of the bridge, and purringly stretched himself out toward his friend.

"He is very jealous, is Boozy," said the sergeant kindly, rubbing the cat's head. "Don't come any nearer, little miss. He don't like to see strangers with me, and he is shy of

everything now. He wouldn't come near me for a while after the park uniform was changed from gray to blue."

"He caresses you because you feed him," said Eugene, with a side glance at the animal, who had stretched himself on his back, and was playfully biting and patting the sergeant's hand.

"You don't enter into the animal's feelings at all," said the sergeant benevolently. "You don't think that there is a little heart inside that furry body — that it grew sick and sad when it was shut out from its home."

"I do not comprehend in the least," said Eugene in his most grown-up fashion. "A cat cannot suffer."

"Perhaps some day you will understand," said the sergeant kindly. "In the meantime let me tell you something that will prove to you that the cat does like me. Some months ago I was transferred to the Public Garden; and this cat, that would not come out of these bushes for a stranger, not if he was to whistle till doomsday, braved the racket of the streets,

and, what was worse to him, the people, and went down there to find me."

"The sweet little pussy!" squealed Virgie. "Mister Policeman, let me stroke him."

"Yes; but come gently," said the sergeant.

Virgie, however, made a delighted run, that sent the cat flying into the underbrush.

The sergeant looked amused and went on. "I didn't know what to make of it when I looked down, and saw the king purring with joy, and rubbing himself against my legs. I said, 'Boozy, go back to the Fens; this is no place for a cat, and maybe I'll be sent there by and by.'"

"Did he return?" asked Eugene.

"Yes; he came straight back here; and I begged for an exchange, and here I found him on the lookout for me when I was sent back. Don't fret, little miss; you can see the king another day. I will try to call up his chum for you," and he whistled again. Boozy's chum, however, did not come.

"He is probably hunting," said the sergeant. "He and Boozy between them keep this end

of the park clean, and do good service to the city of Boston. They know all the holes of the mice and moles that would destroy the plants, and many a morning bright and early have I seen those two cats watching beside them. They catch sparrows too; smart isn't the word for them; and the other day Boozy tackled an eel."

"An eel," said Eugene, who was beginning to get interested; "one of those creatures parallel to a snake that lives in the water?"

"The same," said the sergeant, chuckling. "The king got mad with the eel because he wouldn't submit quietly to being killed, but wound himself tightly round his body. Boozy was surprised that the eel would dare to meddle with him, the king of the park; and he bit the life out of him in two minutes."

"I have read," said Eugene, "that cats dislike water."

"They mostly do," said the sergeant. "We have an old thing, though, down below that comes in every morning as wet as a seal from fishing. But she doesn't dare to come up

here. Boozy would box her ears, and send her home. This part of the park belongs to him and his chum. He makes the other twenty cats keep to their own end of it."

"He is a naughty pussy to box the ears of the other pussies," said Virgie warmly.

"You must remember, little miss, that human beings have been a bit rough on Boozy," said the sergeant with a mischievous twinkle in his eye, "and he has learned some bad habits from them."

"Does the cat live here in winter?" asked Eugene.

"Oh, yes! he doesn't mind the change of seasons. We shovel about twenty feet of path for him, and clear the snow from the parapet so he can lie in the sun. Then I'm a little particular about his food — you haven't seen his dining-room;" and he pointed to a sheltered nook where sheets of brown paper overspread the ground. "Come around any day at 1.30, and you'll see King Boozy at dinner."

"We'll come running and jumping to see the sweet pussy," said Virgie. "I'll go ask

Bridget not to forget me about it:" and she ran away in the direction of the nurses.

"Where are these other cats that you speak of?" asked Eugene with affected indifference.

"Oh! you're beginning to get interested, are you," said the sergeant. "I'll show them to you some other day. I must go now, and find out what those fellows are doing in that boat on the pond. Good-by, Boozy;" and waving his hand to the cat, that he knew was staring at him from some secluded nook, he was about to hurry away from the lad, when he remembered something, and turned on his heel. "Before I go," he said, "let me tell you, young boy, that I know what your grandfather does."

"Did you presume to force inquiries," said the lad quickly, "when I assured you that I should tell you myself?"

"No; I did not. I happened to remember that I had seen some one answering to the description of what I'd suppose your grandfather to be like in a French jeweller's shop on Washington Street. He mends watches, doesn't he?"

"Yes," scarcely breathed the boy, with an agonized blush.

"I wouldn't feel bad about it, if I were you," said the sergeant compassionately. "That's a decent way of getting a living."

"For you, yes," said the boy mournfully; "for a de Vargas, no;" and dropping his young head on his breast, he walked away.

CHAPTER III.

A CHILD IN TROUBLE.

THE sergeant had not seen Eugene for a week; but although he had not seen him, he could not get him out of his mind.

As he sauntered about the park day after day, his vigilant eyes going hither and thither over roads and foot-paths to see that no trespassers loitered in them and defaced the growing trees, or launched boats without permission on the waterways, Eugene's pale, thoughtful, and rather unhappy face floated constantly before him.

"It's queer, the interest I take in him," he said to himself on the last day of the week. "It must be because he spoke up so frank-like, and asked me to be his friend. He's of a different cut from any other lad I ever saw. Guess I'll look him up after I get off to-day. I'd like to inquire about him, anyway; and

there's no one to ask here, for the little miss and her nurse have given up coming too. I guess they've been promenading on the sunny side of Common-vealth Avenue on account of the wind in the Fens."

Every evening at six the sergeant went off duty. On that evening, instead of going home, he bent his footsteps toward No. 29 Lovejoy Street.

While turning a corner swiftly he ran into a girl who was hurrying along with her head bent forward.

It was Virtue Ann, Eugene's nurse; and on seeing the sergeant, she threw up her head with a quick catching of her breath.

"Did I frighten you?" asked the sergeant.

"Oh, no, sir!" said Virtue Ann miserably.

"Then, what's the matter with you?" he asked in a puzzled voice.

"It's not you," said Virtue Ann, bringing her handkerchief out of her pocket, and rolling it into a little ball.

"What is it then?"

"It's the little boy — his grandfather's dead, you know."

"Not the little French boy's grandfather?"

"Yes, sir."

"I'm sorry for this," said the sergeant soberly. "That's why you haven't come to the Fens."

"Yes, sir."

"And what's the boy going to do?"

"Oh, oh! that's what bothers me;" and Virtue Ann's tears began to shower down like rain. "It's an awful hard case. There he sits day after day in those little stuffy rooms, waiting for a letter from France; and if what he wants doesn't come something just too dreadful for anything will happen."

"Too dreadful!" repeated the sergeant. "Come now, young woman, take it easy, and just stop crying, will you? There's lots of charitable people in this city, and orphans' homes and so on. He'll be all right."

"Do you suppose he'd go into an orphans' home?" said Virtue Ann, drying her eyes and speaking half indignantly. "You don't know him, sir. He's proud and shy, like a little old man. His grandfather made him just

like himself. Oh! he's got a lot to answer for. He was a queer old man, and went peering about with those little eyes of his, just as if he was looking out for wickedness in everything."

"Has the boy relatives in France?" asked the sergeant.

"Yes; one rich grand-uncle on his mother's side. It was to him Master Eugene wrote; and how do you think he began his letter, sir? He had no one else by him; so he read it to me, and put it into English so I could understand. It began this way, 'Robber, my grandfather is now dead; and I call upon you to restore to me, his rightful heir, the chatto' — is that the right word, sir?"

"I guess so," said the sergeant.

"Well, anyway," continued Virtue Ann, "Master Eugene laid down the law to him. He wants him to give up this big house, and the servants and some money, and if he does not that little innocent creature will — oh, dear, dear!" and she fell to catching her breath again, and could not speak.

"What will he do?" asked the sergeant impatiently.

"It's too miserable — I can't say it," replied Virtue Ann. "He'll make way with himself, the little dear."

"Are you crazy?" asked the sergeant.

"No, sir — no, sir. You don't know that boy. If you'd lived with him as I have you'd understand him. He's just as set in his way as a man. Why, he's even told me how he'll kill himself;" and she whispered a few words in the sergeant's ear that made him start back and stare at her.

"Do go see him," said Virtue Ann. "He took a kind of a fancy to you; I guess it must have been your uniform."

"I guess so," said the sergeant. "Where are you going?"

"To the corner grocery for some bread and olives."

"Well, you go on then, and I'll call to see the child."

"I'll hurry back," said Virtue Ann; and she sped on her way.

The sergeant went quickly down the street until he found No. 29. On arriving there, he stepped inside the lobby; and after ringing the bell marked 4, he put his ear to the tube beside it.

Presently he heard in Eugene's clear voice, "Who is there?"

"Sergeant Hardy," replied the man.

"Will you have the goodness to walk up?" said Eugene; and as he spoke he pressed a spring that made the entrance door fly open, and enabled the sergeant to enter, and mount the long flight o. stairs.

At the top of the house he found himself in a narrow, uncarpeted hall, where a door stood wide open with Eugene beside it.

"How do you do?" said the boy gravely, extending his hand.

"I'm well," said the sergeant: "and I'm sorry to hear of your trouble."

Eugene bowed in his unchildish fashion, and led the way to a small, barely furnished parlor.

The sergeant put his helmet on the table,

and sat down by a window, from which an extended view of distant hills could be had over the tops of far and near houses; while Eugene seated himself opposite, and stretching out his slender arms and legs, tried hard to fill the chair that had been a favorite one with his dead grandfather.

His endeavor to look grave and manly was not successful. He only impressed the sergeant as being curiously pitiful and pathetic; and the words, "Poor little chap," burst almost involuntarily from his lips.

Eugene grew rather white; but he managed to bow again, and to say composedly, "Thank you, Mr. Officer."

"When did your grandfather die?" asked the sergeant.

"Five days ago."

"And was it sudden?"

"Extremely so. He came home from the town much fatigued. He lay down on his bed, rose up once, and called in a loud voice, 'Eugene!' I ran to him, but the breath had left him."

"You have written to your relatives?" said the sergeant.

"Yes," replied Eugene. "I sent a letter to my grand-uncle, who bought from the government the confiscated estate of my grandfather. I demanded money from him to enable me to live. If he sends it, all will be well. If not" —

"Well, if not," said the sergeant, "there are plenty of people here who will look after you."

Eugene's pale face flushed. "Could I become a pauper? No, Mr. Officer. If I do not receive some of the rents from my grandfather's estate, I shall dispose of myself otherwise."

"How long since you've been out doors?" asked the sergeant abruptly.

"Not since my grandfather died," said Eugene sadly. "I have not cared for it."

"Will you go home with me now and have supper?" asked the sergeant. "I would be proud and happy to show you my wife."

Before Eugene could speak, a clapping of hands was heard. Virtue Ann had come

quietly in, and had heard the sergeant's proposal. "Yes, Master Eugene, do go," she said joyfully.

Eugene hesitated. "Do, please," said Virtue Ann coaxingly; "it will do you good."

"Very well, sir, I accept with alacrity your invitation," said Eugene, slipping from his chair, and standing before the sergeant. "It is necessary that I put on my velvet suit," he went on, with a slight sparkle in his eyes, and addressing Virtue Ann as he passed her.

"Yes, yes," she replied; "I will come and get it down for you."

In a few minutes she came hurrying back to the sergeant. "I'm right glad you asked him, sir. I never was in such a tight box in my life as to know what to do about this child. You see, I'm a stranger here, as you might say, for I've only been four months in the city; and his grandfather didn't seem to have any friends, and I don't know any one to go to, and his money is most gone, and he's such a queer little thing, and flies into a rage if I cross him; and I don't know what to do, and I wish you'd

advise him. I asked Bridget to talk to Mrs. Manning about him, — that's the little girl's mother; but she says the lady would clap him into a school or some place with a lot of children, where he'd be most cr... I'll go see Bridget again to-night. I wish I'd money to keep the little dear with me, if he'd stay. He's so sweet and elegant in his ways; but I'm only a poor girl, and I'm getting pretty near my last dollar — oh, here he is! Good-by, Master Eugene; I'll call for you at nine."

The sergeant and Eugene went slowly down the staircase, and Virtue Ann stood watching them until they were out of sight. Then she drew a long sigh, and went into the kitchen to get something to eat.

The sergeant and Eugene scarcely spoke as they went along the street. The man was silent because he was wondering what he could do to help the boy beside him. The boy was silent because, despite himself, a soft joy and peace were stealing into his troubled heart, as he once more mingled with his fellow-beings, and breathed the pure evening air.

At last the sergeant stopped before a neat wooden house near the Fens. "This is my home," he said.

Eugene brought back his eyes from the distant horizon, and flashed a quick, appreciative glance at the small house and the pretty garden.

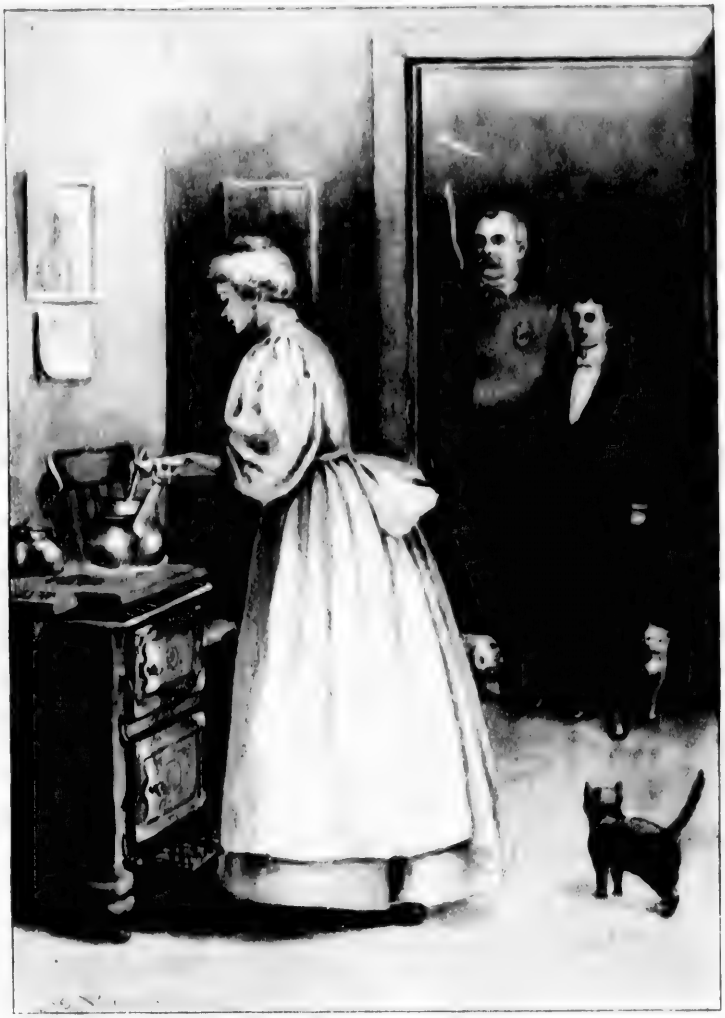
"Come in," said the sergeant gruffly. "My wife will be getting the supper."

Eugene saw no face looking out for them between the ruffled window curtains. All was quiet and still, — the sergeant had evidently no children; and the boy thoughtfully went into the house, and hung up his cap on a rack in the hall.

"I'll not put you in the parlor," said the sergeant. "Let's go find the missis;" and he stalked out toward the kitchen at the back of the house.

Eugene followed him curiously, and with some hesitation.

"Isn't that a picture?" said the sergeant. He had pushed open the kitchen door; and Eugene, looking in, saw a small, exquisitely



"Well, Wife, I've brought a Visitor Home To Night."

clean room, with pictures on the walls, and white curtains at the windows, and a woman cooking something over a gas-stove.

"Well, wife," said the sergeant agreeably, "I've brought a visitor home to-night; he's the little French boy I told you about. He has had a great misfortune,—his grandfather is dead;" and he gently pushed Eugene forward.

The woman raised her head slightly; and Eugene saw that she had a fresh face, rather younger than the sergeant's, clear blue eyes, and a quantity of soft white hair.

"Stephen," she said, in a spoiled, almost childish voice, "how could you? there's only stew enough for two, and you know I don't like boys."

"Yes, yes, I know," he said good-naturedly. "Here's the boy; just look round and tell him so yourself."

Mrs. Hardy did turn around in the twinkling of an eye, the uplifted spoon in her hand. "How do you do?" she said quickly. "I didn't see you — don't mind what I say. I have

just a little prejudice against boys, because they tease my cats."

"And this boy has a little prejudice against you on two scores," said the sergeant, chuckling amiably.

"What are they?" asked Mrs. Hardy.

"I'll tell you later on," said the sergeant.

Mrs. Hardy laughed softly, and bent her white head over the stove; while her husband pointed to a rocking-chair drawn up by one of the windows, and hospitably invited Eugene to sit down on it.

Eugene, however, would not seat himself while his hostess was standing, and contented himself with leaning against it.

The sergeant excused himself, and went away to change his uniform; while Mrs. Hardy, between the intervals of stirring the dish on the stove, looked curiously at Eugene over her shoulder.

She was dressed all in white: and there was something so attractive and unique in her appearance, in her fresh face and her snowy hair, that the boy had difficulty in keeping himself from staring at her.

"So your grandfather is dead," she said in a low voice, as if she were talking to herself. "You must feel badly about it, though you are only a boy."

Eugene, without knowing why, felt himself growing sorry for her because she was sorry for him.

"One must suffer in this world," he said patronizingly. "It is fate."

"You are young to have found that out," said the woman quietly. Then, before he could answer her, she said, "Do you like oyster stew?"

"I shall eat with pleasure anything that you prepare, madam," said the boy courteously; "and, indeed, that is one of my favorite dishes — allow me to assist you;" and he hurried forward to help her in carrying the dish to the near dining-room.

"Did you hear me say that there would not be enough oysters for three?" asked Mrs. Hardy, fixing her bright blue eyes on the boy's face.

"No, madam," he said without hesitation.

"But you must have — you were close by."

Eugene tried not to smile, but he could not help it.

"You are telling a story in order to save my feelings, aren't you?" she said brusquely.

Eugene shrugged his shoulders. "A story — well, scarcely that."

"It is better to hurt my feelings," she said gravely, "than to say what is not true. I spoke too quickly about the oysters. Here is cold meat and a salad — we shall have enough. I suppose you like oil in your salad."

"I do, madam."

"I've noticed French people do. My husband takes sugar and vinegar on his. Now I will get the chocolate, and we can sit down as soon as Stephen comes."

"Why, you and my wife are getting on famously," said the sergeant, rubbing his hands as he entered the room.

Eugene looked at him. His appearance was quite changed. He was now dressed in a suit of dark brown clothes, and he wore a

red necktie, and had a white flower in his buttonhole.

"This boy is not like other boys," said Mrs. Hardy calmly; "he is a gentleman."

"So you like him," said the sergeant teasingly. "A pity it is that he can't like you."

"Why can't he like me?" said Mrs. Hardy, sitting down behind the chocolate and milk pitchers, and motioning Eugene to sit beside her.

"Because you are two things that he doesn't care for."

"What are they?"

"You are a woman and a former school-teacher."

"Don't you like women?" asked Mrs. Hardy of Eugene.

"Madam," he said gallantly, "the world would be a dreary place without your charming sex."

"And school-teachers?"

"Oh! I detest them," he said frankly, "with but few exceptions;" and he bowed to her.

"Do you always talk like this?" asked Mrs. Hardy with undisguised curiosity.

Eugene smiled at her. He knew that he talked like a grown-up man.

"Don't tease the boy," said the sergeant. "He isn't a prig, anyway. Do you know," he went on, addressing Eugene, "that I'm very fond of my wife?"

"You do not surprise me," said Eugene with his lips; and in his heart he thought, "What astonishing candor! I never met such people."

"Her father used to be worth his weight in gold," said the sergeant. "He owned a flour-mill. Then he failed and died; and my wife, like a brave girl, taught and supported herself till I married her. I guess she'll never do that again, though. She has got a rich old aunt that is going to leave her some money some day, so she will be provided for whatever happens to me."

"I congratulate you," said Eugene to his hostess.

"I hope your grand-uncle will do as square

a thing by you as her aunt is doing by her," said the sergeant. "We've got it down in black and white."

Eugene's face grew so pale that Mrs. Hardy shook her head at her husband. Then she pressed the boy to eat various things that she laid on his plate.

"Your hair is just like a pile of snow to-night," said the sergeant, affectionately regarding the top of his wife's head. "Do you know, boy, some people are mischievous enough to ask if that hair has been turned white on account of my sins?" and he laughed uproariously. "What do you tell them, Bess?"

"I tell them no," she said, shaking her head. "We all turn gray in our family when we're forty."

"It gives you the appearance of being in *grande toilette*," said Eugene, who had recovered his composure. "One could imagine you just stepping into your carriage to attend a ball."

Mrs. Hardy looked pleased, and handed him a huge slice of cake.

The Hardys did not spend a very long time at the table; and when supper was over the sergeant withdrew to the garden to smoke, while Eugene begged to assist his hostess in carrying the dishes to the kitchen.

"Do you really want to do it?" she said earnestly; "or is it only your politeness that makes you ask? No, don't answer quickly; take a minute to think."

Out through the open window Eugene could see the little garden flooded with electric light from the near street, and the sergeant sauntering about it with a pipe in his mouth.

"You had rather be with him, had you not?" said Mrs. Hardy.

"I had," replied Eugene, the words slipping out of his mouth before he could recall them.

"Then, run away," said Mrs. Hardy; "it is good for boys to be in the open air as much as possible, and I am used to washing my dishes myself. That china belonged to my mother, and was very expensive, and you might let it fall; and then, perhaps you would spot your velvet suit."

Eugene went out-of-doors; and while walking about the moist garden paths, he followed the sergeant's directions with regard to picking a number of the sweet tremulous flowers to take home with him.

"What games can you play?" asked the sergeant as his eye ran over the pleasing symmetry of Eugene's figure.

"I can fence and dance," said Eugene, "and ride passably; also I am fond of fishing, and I can run well at the game one calls 'prisoner's base' in this country."

"Good; but what have you done here? Do you play base-ball and cricket or foot-ball?"

"Not as yet," said the boy sadly, but proudly; "we can afford nothing."

"We must see to that if you stay in Boston," said the sergeant. "You'll not make yourself a man if you don't have manly exercise. Why, here's Dodo coming home, and old Toddles with her."

Eugene lifted up his eyes and smiled in amusement at two rather decrepit cats that were climbing the garden fence.

"These are our house cats," said the sergeant, "promoted from the park to home service on account of old age. Come in, pussies, and have some supper."

The tortoiseshell pair before entering the house walked purringly around the sergeant, and rubbed themselves against his legs.

"It's wonderful what affection the creatures have," he said musingly, as he took his pipe from his mouth, and looked down at them. "Don't you like dumb animals, boy?"

"I had a pony in France that I rather cared for," said Eugene, "and I like hunting-dogs imperfectly well."

"But you don't understand dumb creatures," said the sergeant. "I can tell by the way that you speak that you don't. There's a whole book of knowledge shut up from you, boy. Some day perhaps it will be opened, and you'll enjoy life more from knowing that there are more live things to enjoy it and to like you than you have had any suspicion of. Let's go in now. I guess the missis has got things tidied."

Mrs. Hardy was standing on the porch, looking like a girl with her slim figure and white gown.

"Would you like to play some games?" she asked her guest softly.

He showed a polite pleasure at the proposal, and during the next two hours Mrs. Hardy initiated him into the mysteries of some American parlor amusements that he had never before heard of.

When Virtue Ann came for him, his cheeks were flushed and his face happy. He looked like a different boy from the little careworn creature that had arrived there a few hours earlier.

"Thank you kindly, ma'am," said Virtue Ann in a low voice to Mrs. Hardy; "you've done an angel's deed in comforting him. I'm sure I don't know what's to become of the little lad;" and she sighed heavily.

All the evening Mrs. Hardy had been regarding the boy with a curious intentness of gaze. At Virtue Ann's words her eyes again wandered to Eugene: and she said wistfully,

"Do you say that he is quite alone in the world, quite, quite alone?"

"Yes; except his old grand-uncle in France," said Virtue Ann with a sniff. "He'll not do anything for him, I misdoubt. I've heard the grandfather talking about him; and I guess he's no better than a skinflint, and" — but here Virtue Ann was obliged to break off abruptly, for Eugene came forward to take leave of his hostess.

Mrs. Hardy listened with a smile on her face to his well-bred assurances that he had had a pleasant visit.

"You were criticising us all the time," she said keenly; and when Eugene, in discomposure, could do nothing but gaze helplessly at her, she bent down suddenly and kissed him.

"Never mind, little lad," she said, "I know that this has been a change for you. Good-night, good-night;" and long after her husband went into the house, she stood in the doorway, her eyes wandering down the street that Virtue Ann and her young charge had taken to go home.

Virtue Ann had been quite impressed by the cosiness and pretty furnishings of the little cottage, and by the mingled dignity and oddity of the sergeant's wife.

"She was like an old picture with that white hair," she murmured to herself; "and yet there's no nonsense about her. I guess she's a good housekeeper too, for everything was as neat as wax. What a good home that would be for Master Eugene!" and she sighed as she glanced at the quiet lad beside her.

Sergeant Hardy was tired that night, and went to bed as soon as Eugene had left his house. About one o'clock he was awakened by the sound of suppressed sobbing; and starting up in bed, he dimly saw his wife standing by the window.

"What's the matter, Bess?" he asked sleepily.

She lifted her white head that she had laid against the window-pane. "O Stephen! did I wake you? I'm sorry. It's nothing — go to sleep again."

"People don't get up out of bed in the mid-

dle of the night to go lean up against windows and stare out into the dark for nothing," he said in a matter-of-fact way. "What's wrong with you, Bess?"

"Stephen," she said in a repressed voice, "in all the years that we've been married you've often heard me say how glad I am that I've never had a child."

"Often, Bess."

"How glad — how delighted I am," she went on quietly, though he knew by her tones that she was trembling like a leaf, "that we have not had to launch another little child into this world of care and trouble: it's such a sad world for children."

"I know, I know," he said, trying not to yawn as he listened to her.

"They're such a worry when they're growing up," she continued sorrowfully; "they get ill, and you have to fuss over them in the daytime, and they call you out of your warm bed at night."

"Of course they do," he responded. "They're always bleating like lambs after their parents."

"And mothers get dragged down and worn out; and then, when the little things grow old enough to be a comfort, they go away from you out into the world, or else you die and leave them, and almost break your heart in the going, because you think other people won't be as tender with them as you have been."

"Naturally," growled the sergeant. "A body would almost think you had been through the experience."

"There are too many children in the world," said his wife vehemently. "Hear me say again, Stephen, that I'm glad, glad, *glad*, that I have never had any;" and she sank out of his sight into a seat in a dark corner, and covered her face with her hands.

"You're so glad," said her husband kindly, and yet a little ironically, "that you're crying your eyes out about it."

"Let me alone, Stephen," she said passionately; "let me cry. You have always been kind and indulgent with me, and let me have my own way; and I have got selfish, and look out always for my own comfort."

"Oh! never mind, never mind, Bess," he said consolingly. "Get into bed again; you'll take cold."

"No, no!" she exclaimed. "Let me be unselfish for once. Let me imagine that in the next room there is a little sick child, that it may call me at any minute, that I must be ready to go to it;" and sobbing as if her heart would break, she drew her white hair over her head like a veil, and curled herself up miserably on the low seat.

The sergeant looked in her direction compassionately and with resignation. "I'd cry with you, Bess, if I could," he said drowsily, "but I can't. I'll get up and make a hot drink for you, though, if you like."

"No, no; I don't want a hot drink," she moaned.

"I guess I'll just let you alone. You women like to make yourselves miserable sometimes," he said philosophically; and laying his head down on the pillow, he was soon asleep.

CHAPTER IV.

THE REST OF THE CATS.

EUGENE had faithfully promised the sergeant that he would go for a walk in the park the next morning, and there the sergeant accordingly met him at eleven o'clock.

The boy was strolling along the southern part of the Fens; and as he halted near the Agassiz bridge, the sergeant caught up with him.

"Good-morning," he said cheerily. "Where's your nurse with the good name to-day?"

"Good-morning," said Eugene with a bright look at him. "Virtue Ann had sweeping to do; and she says that I am now sufficiently old to go out unattended, though it is not the custom to do so in my country until one is older."

"You're big enough to go alone," said the sergeant. "We think here that it makes a

mollycoddle of a boy to have some one at his heels watching him all the time. Have you paid your respects to John O'Reilly this morning?"

"No; I have just arrived from home. I shall go there later."

"No news from France yet I suppose?"

"Oh, no! it is not time."

"Well, you'll have to wait. There's nothing like patience in this life. Don't you want to come down this path with me, and see the rest of my colony of cats? This is where they live."

"It will give me great pleasure," said Eugene.

The sergeant turned abruptly from the road to a shady path leading to a duck-pond. Stationing himself midway in it, he gave a whistle that Eugene noticed was quite different from his call for King Boozy.

The boy stood aside; and presently he saw little gray heads peeping cautiously from between the leaves, and heard a number of timid voices giving tentative mews of welcome.

Then the Cats came fast enough, Young and Old, Gay and Sober.

"It isn't feeding-time," said the sergeant; "when it is they just tumble over each other to get to me, — and they're a little afraid of you."

Eugene drew still farther back; and then the cats came fast enough, — young and old, gay and sober ones, purring contentedly and waving their tails, as they circled in and out about the sergeant, and jumped up to rub themselves against him.

"Those are sisters," said the sergeant, indicating two young gray pussies who were walking about with tails held proudly aloft; "and that is the old mother, the queen of the gang," he added, laughing at an austere Maltese cat who was cuffing the ears of a kitten; "she makes them stand round."

Eugene addressed a complimentary remark to the Maltese cat, who stared at him suspiciously from eyes that looked like white currants in the strong light of the sun.

"You can't deceive her," said the sergeant, as the cat turned away from Eugene to join the band about their patron. "She knows you

don't like her. You can fool a human being quicker than you can an animal; and an animal won't lie as often as a human being, though they will do it sometimes. You needn't try to catch them, little one," he went on, addressing a child who came suddenly racing down a path; "they won't let any one but the park police lay a hand on them."

Every cat had disappeared at the advent of the child, and with a disappointed face she went back the way she had come.

"Would you like to see the cats' winter bedfellows?" said the sergeant, addressing Eugene.

"I should like it remarkably well," said the boy; and he followed the sergeant to the duck-pond.

On arriving there the sergeant gave a third variety of whistle, and a host of glossy creatures rushed ashore, quacking and gabbling reproachfully at their friend, who stood merely looking at them without offering them food.

"They're annoyed with me," he said; and he laughed, as the ducks one and all struck

the ground sharply with their beaks, and turning their backs on him filed into the pond.

"You greedy things," he went on; "your thoughts don't get much higher than good living, though you're pretty kind to the cats in winter. Do you know ducks and cats all sleep together after it gets cold?"

"Really!" ejaculated Eugene. "Is that a possible thing?"

"Yes," said the sergeant; "they sleep in boxes filled with hay. My wife says it is 'sweet' to see the ducklings and kittens brought up together. She has a very kind heart for animals, has my wife."

"I can well imagine that Mrs. Hardy is always kind," said Eugene.

The sergeant glanced at him sharply. The boy spoke in the tones of ordinary politeness, not warmly by any means.

"Do you keep no pigeons?" Eugene went on.

"Yes, a few," said the sergeant.

"And where is the place that they live,—the *pigeonnier*, as one says in France?"

"In the top of the duck-house. They have no house of their own."

"In France nearly every country house has a *pigeonnier*," said Eugene.

"We'll get one here in time," said the sergeant. "Now, if you want to inspect the rest of my menagerie, let us go back to the bridge."

"What have you there?" asked Eugene as they paced slowly up the path.

"A flock of twenty-one geese. See, there they are out on the marshes. Hello, they're having a quarrel with the wild geese."

"Have you wild ones also?"

"A few only. Hear how they're screaming. What tempers! I'll whistle, and perhaps I'll catch their attention."

The sergeant whistled in vain. The wind was blowing over the marshes, and the geese were too much engaged in their dispute to heed his voice that only reached them faintly.

"They remind me of the prairie fowl out West," said the sergeant. "They were mighty fond of dancing round each other, but they always wound up with a row. Now, I haven't

anything more to show you this morning. I believe I'll walk up Boylston Street way with you a bit. Come over some feeding-time to see these creatures. They're more interesting then. Don't bring your nurse, though, down here. These cats just hate women."

"For the same reason that the king does?" asked Eugene.

"Yes; they've mostly been turned out-of-doors by women, and they don't forget it. I'm sorry it's so, for I am fond of women myself; but animals, and cats especially, don't forget an injury; that is, the most of them don't. They're very like us, some forgive and some don't; and they're just as full of contradictions as we are. Some of them will put up with things from the few people they like best that they won't put up with from a stranger. For instance, a dog will let his master cuff him round, when he'd bite a stranger that would lay a finger on him. That's just the way we are with our own families. My wife and I will take things from each other that we wouldn't from other people. By the way,

there are some fine boys coming along that I'd like to introduce you to. Do you see them? That is a grand fellow, that one with the foot-ball under his arm."

Eugene shrank back, and made a gesture of dissent.

"You'll like them," said the sergeant earnestly; and before Eugene could speak he had addressed the boys, who halted before him.

"We are going to run races on the long path," said one of them.

"You ought to cut over the ground like a North Dakota jack-rabbit," said the sergeant turning to Eugene.

The French lad tried to speak, but could not. He had so long been cut off from the society of other boys that getting among them again was like taking a plunge into a cold bath. However, one boy, to whom the sergeant nodded in a significant way, took Eugene under his protection; and with unconcealed delight the sergeant stood watching the round dozen of them kick up their heels, and scamper over the level road toward their racing-ground.

Eugene, to the sergeant's pride, kept up with the best of them. "He is long and lean, just like a greyhound," muttered the man as he went contentedly on his tour of inspection through the park; "but he looks a little underfed. I wish he could get some of Bess's roast beef occasionally."

When the sergeant went home to his dinner at one o'clock, he told his wife about meeting Eugene.

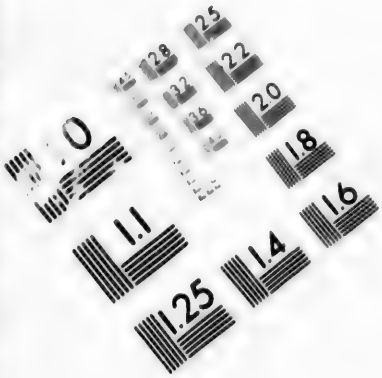
"I'm glad you sent him to play," she said. "His nurse has been here, and we were talking about him. It's a shame to have the child so like an old man."

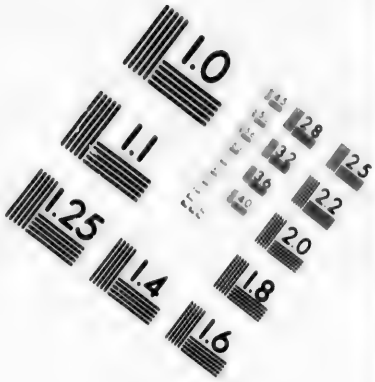
"Yes; it is," said the sergeant absently. "What have you got for dinner, Bess? I'm fearfully hungry, and I smell something good."

"Steak and onions and apple-pie," said his wife. "Stephen, I want that boy."

"You want that boy!" said her husband in a dazed manner. "What do you mean?"

"Just exactly what I say," she replied with great composure. "I want him to come here. His nurse has heard of a good situation, and





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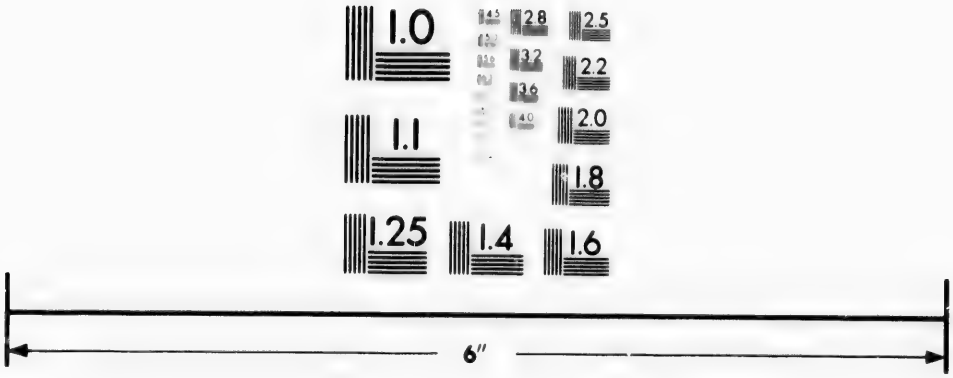

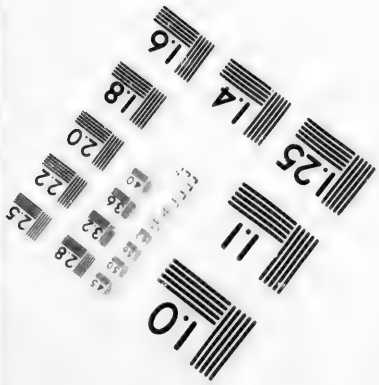

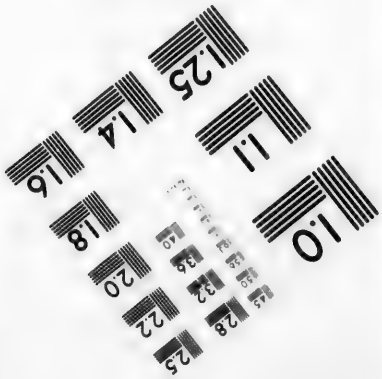

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it is too bad to keep her on there living with him when they have so little money."

Her husband sat down to the table, and began to carve the steak. "Bess," he said remonstratingly, "you couldn't get him here — that little thoroughbred, proud fellow. He looks down on us."

"Why does he look down on us?" asked Mrs. Hardy.

"Well, I guess he thinks we don't belong to the aristocracy."

"Aren't you as good a man as there is in this city?" asked Mrs. Hardy earnestly.

"I shouldn't wonder if I am," said the sergeant with great complacency, "though I might be better than I am. But, Bess, you don't understand."

"I understand this much," she said. "Here is a lonely child in a big city, without a soul but a poor ignorant nurse to look after him. If you take him by force, and put him somewhere where he doesn't want to go, he'll pine to death. If we can coax him here, and make him happy till something is arranged" —

"That's all very fine," said the sergeant; "I see what you're after, Bess. You've taken a great fancy to that boy. You'll get him here, and fall to petting him; then, when he's sent for to go to France, you'll break your heart."

"I don't believe he will ever be sent for," said Mrs. Hardy calmly.

The sergeant laid aside his knife and fork, and brought his hand down on the table. "Now understand, Bess, once for all, I'm not going to bring up other people's children. If I had a son of my own it would be different. How do we know how this little shaver will turn out? His head is crammed full of notions, and he thinks no more of telling a lie than I do of telling the truth."

"Some one has to bring him up," said Mrs. Hardy; "and he only tells stories out of politeness. He will get over it."

"I told you before that he's different from us," said the sergeant irritably. "Don't tease, Bess."

"No, I won't, Stephen," she said quietly; "perhaps you are right, only" —

"Only what?" asked her husband.

"Only I'm lonely here all day without you," she said in a low voice.

"Will you give me a cup of tea?" asked her husband. "You're not crying, are you?" he went on suspiciously.

"No, Stephen; I cried enough last night to last me for a long time."

"You don't usually have a crying-spell oftener than once in six weeks," he remarked with assumed cheerfulness. "I guess some one will look out for that boy. I daresay there are lots of rich people in this city that would adopt him if they knew what a grand family he comes of."

"Rich people aren't as kind as poor ones, Stephen, you know that."

"Yes, I do," he said warmly. "I notice it isn't the best-dressed people that give nickels to the beggars in the streets. It's the shabby woman that takes out her purse when she passes some poor wretch. She's been there, or near enough to pity — not that I approve of encouraging begging," he added in an official manner.

"It must be terrible not to have enough to eat," said Mrs. Hardy with a shudder.

The sergeant shuddered too. "Bess," he said, "it's easy enough to say that, but not one person in a million can feel it. Most people haven't the slightest idea what starvation is. I've told you about my getting lost out West on the plains. All the man went out of me two days after we ate our last bite of food. I was nothing but a beast. I could have eaten you if you had been there. The pain and the sickness and the dreams of food were awful, and for weeks after we were found I could digest only the simplest things. Do you suppose that boy ever goes hungry?"

"Meat is rather expensive in Boston," said Mrs. Hardy. "I think by what the girl says they don't get much of that."

The sergeant finished his dinner in silence; and in silence he buckled on his belt, and took his helmet and went to the front door. Then he came back again.

"Bess," he said gruffly, "you said last night what a good husband I'd been to you."

"Yes, Stephen," she replied; "and I say it again, now and always, and I don't care who hears me."

"Well, you've been a good wife to me," he returned: "and I don't care who hears me say it, either. Get that boy here if you like — maybe it is a good move. We're always having to do things in the dark in this life, and then some way or other light shines on us; but Bess" — and he hesitated, and looked at her from under drooping eyelids as shyly as if he were a boy himself.

She went up quickly to him, and laid a hand on his broad chest. "I know what you want to say, Stephen, you are jealous; you are afraid I'll think more of that little boy than I do of you."

"That's about the figure of it," he replied.

"Aren't you ashamed of yourself?" she said, "not only to mention such a thing to me, but to dare to think it to yourself. You a big, strong man to be jealous of that little delicate lad. You know just as well as I do why I like him."

The sergeant's face cleared. "You like him for the same reason that you like the cats," he said. "He's been cast out, and he hasn't any one to take an interest in him. Well, pet him all you like, and have him here if you can get him, I don't care;" and the sergeant serenely kissed her, and then wended his way back to the park.

CHAPTER V.

MRS. HARDY MAKES A CALL.

In the middle of that same afternoon, Bridget and Virtue Ann were sitting in the latter's kitchen, talking volubly.

"And sure that's a boss place," Bridget was saying. "You'd do well to jump at the chance, Virtue Ann. Four girls kept, and you only to do part of the up-stairs work; and it's lucky you are."

"But the child," said Virtue Ann uneasily.

"Troth, and it's a pity about him," said Bridget; "but to look out for number one is the game to-day. You can't tie to your apron-strings a child that hasn't a ghost of a claim on you."

"No, I can't," said Virtue Ann; "I know I'm standing in my own light, yet there's something witchy about the little fellow. I wake up in the night and think about him, and vow I'll never leave him."

"And in the morning it's forgetting ye are," said Bridget with a light laugh. "Faith, I'd shake him off in the winking of an eye. It's the city that'll look after him, since his grandfather was an infidel, and they haven't a claim on the holy church. Och! murder, me boy! Virtue Ann!" and Bridget wound up her remarks with a squeal of dismay; for Eugene stood in the doorway, his black, piercing eyes fixed severely on her face.

He did not speak to her, but turned to his nurse. "Virtue Ann," he asked in a sad, penetrating voice, "is it true that you wish to leave me?"

"Master Eugene," stammered the girl, "I thought you were on the sofa asleep, being tired from your walk in the park this morning; I'm sure I never dreamed — if I'd thought you were awake I'd have shut the door."

"Have you a situation offered to you?" asked Eugene coldly.

"Yes, she has," interposed Bridget; "and that is the truth of the matter; and you'll be a good boy, sir, now won't you?"

Eugene still paid no attention to her; and Virtue Ann went on, "I'll not leave you, Master Eugene, don't you be afeard of it. I'm just talking to while away the time."

"Where is it that you wish to go?" asked Eugene.

"It's to Brookline," interposed Bridget. "To a fine house, where she'll get lots of wages, and maybe find a nice home for you, me boy, if you'll be a good, peaceable lad, and let her go quiet-like and aisy."

"When are you required to be there?" pursued Eugene.

"Never, Master Eugene," said Virtue Ann hysterically. "I'm not going. It's only talk."

"And it's to-morrow morning her new mistress would like to have her," said Bridget; "for in the evening she gives a grand dinner-party, and they'll be glad of extra help for the waiting."

"How much do I owe you, Virtue Ann?" asked Eugene.

"Nothing, nothing," said the girl wildly. "Oh! I don't know what brought us into this

scrape. Bridget, I wish you'd held your tongue."

The boy took out his little purse, and opened it. There was not much money in it. He turned over a few silver pieces with the tips of his slim, aristocratic fingers, and his white face grew whiter. Still he said firmly, "It will be necessary to sell the furniture. I will arrange for it. You may leave me in the morning, Virtue Ann;" and he withdrew as softly as he had come.

"The little impident thing," said Bridget wrathfully. "He niver once cast a glance at me."

"He'll never speak to you again," said Virtue Ann mournfully, "nor to me either, after I leave him. I know him; he's the most unforgiving little mortal that ever drew breath. Oh! I wish I hadn't offended him;" and she put her apron up to her face and began to cry.

"Oh, whisht!" said Bridget impatiently. "Just you leave him here; some one will take care of him."

"Oh, I can't, I can't!" said Virtue Ann.

"He's all alone in the world. He don't know any one here, or care for any one, unless it's that police sergeant. I guess I'll go see him right away."

"Hist!" said Bridget, "there's a ring at the bell; go see who it is."

Virtue Ann sprang up, dried her tears, and hurried into the little hall. Mrs. Hardy's voice was asking through the tube if she might come up. "Certainly, certainly, ma'am," said Virtue Ann joyfully; and when a few minutes after she looked over the stair-railing, and saw Mrs. Hardy's white head, crowned by a big black hat, appearing, she exclaimed, "I'm just tickled to death to see you, ma'am. Would you," and she lowered her voice to a mysterious whisper, "mind coming to the kitchen for a minute? Master Eugene's in the parlor, and I want to tell you something."

Mrs. Hardy nodded her head, and without speaking followed the girl to the kitchen, and stood looking in a puzzled way at Bridget, whom she had not seen before.

Virtue Ann quickly explained the situation of affairs to her.

Mrs. Hardy listened attentively: and when Virtue Ann finished speaking, she said, "Will you take me to the boy? I have just come to ask him to visit us as long as he likes."

Virtue Ann was almost beside herself with relief. "You've the best heart in the world, ma'am," she said enthusiastically. "This is the most pleasurable thing that could happen to him. Oh, I'm out of my senses for joy!" and she seized Mrs. Hardy's hand in her own.

The sergeant's wife smiled at her: then she asked again, somewhat impatiently, where Eugene was.

"Here, ma'am," said Virtue Ann; and she threw open the door of the small parlor.

Mrs. Hardy's face changed quickly. The boy sat by the table, his young head bent over a piece of paper, on which he was laboriously writing figures. She knew that his childish head was throbbing with the vain effort to find some way by which he could increase the sum of money that he had on hand.

Poor little one! and vain task beyond his years, she thought pitifully; but she restrained

herself from any open expression of sympathy, for she knew that he would not appreciate it.

He got up slowly when he saw her, and offered her his seat; and with a sharp pang at her heart she noticed the curious facility and unchildishness with which he put his own trouble from him, and waited courteously to hear the object of her visit.

"I have come to see you," she began absently, then she paused. Could this indeed be the same little boy that her husband had seen scampering merrily over the Fens only that morning?

"Did you win any of the races to-day?" she said irrelevantly.

Some color came into Eugene's face, and made him look like a delicate bit of porcelain. "I did," he said eagerly. "I amused myself very much; and I am invited to go again to-morrow if — if other matters will permit;" and he grew grave again.

"What do you mean by other matters?" asked Mrs. Hardy.

"My servant wishes to leave me," said Eugene. "I shall dismiss her in the morning."

Mrs. Hardy did not know whether to laugh or to cry. She certainly took a strange interest in this boy. "And what will you do," she asked, "after the girl goes away?"

"I shall remain here," said Eugene, "until my letter arrives from France."

"But you cannot stay alone."

"Why not, madam?"

"Who ever heard of such a thing?" she said; "you are a mere child. You cannot. Who will cook for you?"

"There are *cafés* and bake-houses near by," said Eugene calmly.

Mrs. Hardy stretched an appealing black-gloved hand to him. "Come to us," she said. "I am here to-day to ask you to make us a long visit. My husband joins with me in this invitation."

"You are most kind, most sagacious," said Eugene slowly; "but it is impossible."

"Why is it impossible?"

"What demand have I on you?" he said civilly, yet haughtily.

"Every one that is in trouble has a claim to hospitality," said Mrs. Hardy warmly. "We have to help each other in this world. We could not go on if we did not."

"And what is your imagination about my trouble?" he asked.

Mrs. Hardy had offended the proud little lad, but she did not stop to choose her next words. "Your trouble is that you are old before your time," she said hurriedly. "You are just like a graybeard. Only the bitter in life seems to be left for you. Come to me, and let me make you a child again;" and she seized one of his slim hands in hers.

To her distress, nay, her horror, the boy drew back from her with a slight sneer. "Madam," he said icily, "my grandfather often said to me, 'Distrust women; you may have the happiness to amuse them for a time, but later on they will throw you aside.' I have not great age myself, but so far I think he has reason."

"And do you think that I only want to amuse myself in taking care of you?" gasped Mrs. Hardy.

"Why not?" and Eugene elevated his eyebrows. "It is either that, or you wish to establish a claim on me, so that I may share my fortune with you."

"Your fortune!" ejaculated Mrs. Hardy; "you have none."

"You know that I expect one," said Eugene in a condescending manner.

"Then, you don't think I came here to-day just out of the kindness of my heart — that I am willing to take care of you, and treat you just as if you were my own little boy, simply from love."

Eugene shrugged his shoulders. "No; why should you? I have no right to this."

"Oh, you naughty, naughty boy!" said Mrs. Hardy, pushing back her chair and angrily confronting him. "I never heard any one talk like you in my life. I don't know what your grandfather could have been thinking of to bring you up like this. You are

not like the Boston bad boy at all; you are much worse. I wouldn't have you in my house;" and the little woman flung herself out of the room.

Virtue Ann and Bridget could not detain her. She fairly ran home; and, throwing herself on a sofa, she mourned in silence and alone until her husband came in for his supper. Then she gave him an account of her visit.

The sergeant laughed until he grew purple in the face. "Bess," he said, "you want an adopted mother yourself. You're not used to managing children. You mustn't fly into a temper so quickly."

"He was so aggravating," sobbed Mrs. Hardy.

"Of course; but think of the way he's been brought up. Why, he's just like a hunted animal now. The weakest thing will turn at the last. Have you ever seen a rat in a corner? He'll fix his teeth in the biggest stick you can poke at him."

"Don't—don't compare that prince of a boy with a rat," said his wife dolefully.

"There, now," pursued the sergeant, "you're not mad with him. You won't let any one abuse him but yourself. You still want him, I see; so he has got to come here — and anyway, law and order must be preserved. Even the cats in the park understand that. What do you think I found the king doing just now?"

"I don't know," sighed Mrs. Hardy in an absent-minded way.

"Well, I came across Squirrel, King Boozy's chum, sitting on a stump, badly mauled. He was by turns polishing himself off with his tongue, and watching the king, who was licking a strange cat. Another strange cat, that had already been whipped, was running away, and I figured the matter out this way. Squirrel had been attacked by the two strangers; and as soon as he could get away, he had brought the king up, who was punishing them thoroughly."

"I don't see what the cats have to do with the boy," said Mrs. Hardy.

"They have a good deal. Don't you see

that Boozy is an old head now; he was disciplining the young strangers that had interfered with Squirrel. Now, this French lad is young — a good bit younger than you and me. Of course he's disagreeable. Who wouldn't be, brought up as he has been? Parents and guardians have to lick young ones into shape. Now, you get the supper ready, and I'll have the boy here in a jiffy, and you can punish him any way that you like. I guess it will be with kindness;" and with a soothing pat on her head her husband left her.

CHAPTER VI.

EUGENE IS ARRESTED.

BRIDGET had gone home. Virtue Ann was putting on the table the bread and chocolate that was to compose Eugene's frugal meal, and the boy himself was sitting in a dull fashion by the window in so deep a revery that he did not hear the door-bell ring, and did not see Sergeant Hardy come into the room.

He only started, and looked up when the words, "At your service, sir," uttered in deep voice, fell upon his ear.

At them he roused himself, and rose to his feet; but the sergeant neither bowed nor offered to shake hands with him in a friendly way as he usually did. His only greeting besides the words that he had spoken was a military salute. Then he stood stiffly against the wall as if waiting for something.

"Will you sit down?" asked Eugene.

"Against orders," said the sergeant. "I've come to arrest you."

"To arrest me," repeated Eugene wonderingly; "what is it that I have done?"

"Warrant for arrest on two charges," said the sergeant.

"Will you mention them," asked Eugene frigidly, and yet politely, for he had great respect for any one in authority.

"First charge," said the sergeant abruptly, "disdainful despicability of my wife's affections; second charge, murderous and malicious designs against your own precious and peculiar self."

Eugene did not know the meaning of despicability; but he saw the mischievous glitter in the sergeant's eye, and he suspected that there was a joke somewhere. "Suppose I refuse to go," he said with much calmness and deliberation.

"I'd pick up your little French figure, and put it under my arm, and you'd be in jail in no time," said the sergeant.

"So I am to go to prison," said Eugene.

"Yes, sir — private jail, permitted through the clemency of the law."

Eugene smiled a little wearily, then he eyed the sergeant all over. He had penetration enough to discover that the man had come there with the determination of taking him away, and he knew that he might as well yield first as last.

"I surrender," he said grandly; "may I ask you, Mr. Officer, until when I am to be in prison?"

"Six weeks," said the sergeant promptly.

"Will you show me the warrant for my arrest?" said Eugene.

The sergeant hesitated, then he thrust his hand into his pocket, and drew out a little wet handkerchief.

"I found my wife crying when I went home," he said. "She was offended and annoyed. I took this little muslin rag away from her, and gave her my big 'mooshawr' you call it, don't you?"

"No," said Eugene; "it will be a *lettre de cachet* in this case. Virtue Ann," he went on,

addressing the maid who stood gaping at them in the doorway, "will you put together in a bag some things for me. It is necessary that I accompany this gentleman to—you did not mention the name of the prison," and he turned to the sergeant.

"To the Bastille," said the sergeant, grinning delightedly at the opportunity of showing a little knowledge of French history.

"To the Bastille," repeated Eugene. "So be it. As a prisoner has no longer rights, will you arrange for the furniture of these rooms to be sold, and some money paid to my servant?"

"Yes, sir," said the sergeant again saluting him.

Eugene went to a desk in the corner of the room, and took out some photographs and private papers, also a miniature portrait of his grandfather, which he put into a black bag that Virtue Ann brought in and laid on the table.

At last he announced himself ready; and the sergeant, who had stood by the door during

the preparations made for departure, stepped forward, and took the bag in his hand.

Virtue Ann began to fidget miserably with her apron, while Eugene looked at her with an unmoved face.

"I can't let you go, pretty little dear," she said at last, standing in front of him, and affectionately smoothing his shoulder with her rough hand.

"I beg that you will compose yourself," said Eugene coolly.

"Aren't you sorry to leave me?" cried Virtue Ann wildly. "You little cold, cold fish."

"Why should I be sorry?" said Eugene, holding back his head; "you have been false to me."

"False! oh, dear, now just hear him," said Virtue Ann. "Well, you've got to let me kiss you anyway, you bad-hearted little thing;" and she stroked his black, glossy head, and pressed her lips to his forehead in a motherly way.

Eugene made a slight grimace, and drew himself away from her, while the sergeant

looked on with an amused smile, and muttered, "I'd like to know what it is about that child that makes the women crazy. It must be out of sheer, clear contrariness, because he doesn't like them, or else it's his fascinating manners. He isn't handsome — not a bit handsomer than I am: come on, young sir," and he began to march downstairs.

"Before we get in the street," he said, pausing in the lobby, "give me your parole, sir, that you won't try to escape."

Eugene hesitated to give it.

"You couldn't go far," said the sergeant, "for I'd be sure to catch you."

"Very well," said the boy; "I yield to the inevitable. I will not try to escape until a letter comes from France."

"All right, mussoo," replied the sergeant; and he tramped on.

Eugene was hungry and tired and inwardly disheartened, though he kept a calm exterior, and he was well pleased to arrive in front of the sergeant's house.

"I guess we'll excuse your attendance at the public table of the jail this evening," said the sergeant cheerfully. "Walk right along this way to your cell, sir."

Eugene followed him down the hall to a little bedroom at the back of the house. It was furnished in pale colors, and a pretty white bed stood in the middle of it. The window was open, and a big bowl of flowers was placed on a small table beside the bed.

"You're to have solitary imprisonment till to-morrow morning," said the sergeant trying to speak sternly. "Your jailer will bring you some supper presently. She's a woman, so you will treat her harmoniously."

Eugene, still holding his cap in his hand, went and stood by one of the open windows. He was not grateful to the sergeant for introducing him to so charming a prison. He was filled with a blind, wild anger at the fate, as he called it, that had laid him under an obligation to these strangers whom he regarded as below himself in the social scale; and he was all the more angry because, child

though he was, he had the acuteness to reflect that in the natural course of things his dissatisfaction would pass away. The more he thought about it the more angry he became; and yet so great control was he able to exert over his feelings when he was disposed to do so, that hardly a trace of his inward disquiet and rebellion appeared on his impassive face.

"Good-night, prisoner," said the sergeant abruptly. "I'm going now. Pleasant dreams to you."

"Good-night, jailer," said Eugene in a repressed voice; "some day I will thank you, but not yet."

The sergeant shrugged his broad shoulders and walked out to the dining-room.

"Bess," he said, laughing softly to himself, as he watched his wife flying around the room a pink spot on each cheek, "I've trapped your fine foreign bird for you. Tame him now if you can."

"I'll tame him," said Mrs. Hardy, tossing her fluffy white head; and she went on with

her occupation of loading a tray with dainties for the young prisoner.

"He'll see his grandfather to-night sure, and all his ancestors," said the sergeant grumblingly, as his eyes wandered over the tray, "if he eats all that. What are you thinking of, Bess, — rich plum-pudding and candy for a child this time of day."

"I thought perhaps he would like to look at them," said Mrs. Hardy; "and there are plenty of substantial things. See this corn bread and chicken, and these vegetables."

"But he mayn't pick them out."

"Oh, yes, he will! he is a sensible boy at heart," said Mrs. Hardy; and she fairly ran from the room and down the hall with the tray.

Eugene opened the door when she called to him, and at the sight of his pallid face she almost dropped the tray.

In silence he cleared the table for her to rest it on. In silence she put it down and gazed at him. At last she said nervously, "I thought you'd rather have your supper in here alone than to come to the table with us."

"Thank you for your benevolence," he said, inclining his head.

Mrs. Hardy twisted her face like a child about to cry. "Let me help you unpack your bag," she said hastily. "The supper things won't get cold for a few minutes."

Eugene opened the bag, and she shook out the clothes as carefully as if they had belonged to a child of her own. Then she showed him some hooks behind a curtain where he could hang them. "And there is the bath-room," she went on, opening the hall door. "Perhaps you will like to take a warm bath by and by. I will put some fresh towels in for you. Now I shall leave you alone, and not bother you until the morning. Good-night;" and she looked at him wistfully.

Eugene opened the door for her, and stood in polite weariness beside it. Then one by one big tears began to roll down his cheeks. He did not know why they came there, and he made no effort to brush them away.

"Do you remember your mother?" asked Mrs. Hardy softly.

"No, madam; she died when I was an infant."

"And have you never had a woman to love you and call you her child, and tuck you in your little bed at night?" asked Mrs. Hardy.

"I have always had a *bonne*, a nurse," said Eugene — "many of them; but my grandfather is the only mother I have had."

"And is there no one in the world that you love now — no one that you cling to?"

"I have the memory of my grandfather and of his Majesty the emperor."

"You're the queerest little boy I ever saw. You are something like the Chinese. They worship their ancestors."

"Possibly," said Eugene with a doubtful glance, as if he questioned the truth of her statement.

"And you really don't care for any one," said Mrs. Hardy. "You must excuse my curiosity; but I never saw man, woman, or child like you."

"I must care for myself," said Eugene solemnly.

"I know what is the matter with you," said Mrs. Hardy triumphantly. "It's just the trouble your great emperor suffered from. He hadn't much faith in human nature, and he despised women."

"The great emperor was but a man," said Eugene stiffly.

"He was concentrated selfishness," said Mrs. Hardy. "I am selfish, my husband is, everybody is; but Napoleon was worse than we are. But why do you cry?" for the tears were still rolling down Eugene's cheeks in a slow and sober procession.

He dabbed at his face with his handkerchief. "I will tell you," he said earnestly. "Since you have been speaking, I have been looking out that window toward the park where your homeless cats live. I did not comprehend about them the other day; now my soul enters the cats' bodies, as we might say, and I feel the dismay that must fill them when they have lost their homes and their protectors. It is horrible. One becomes filled with anguish and bewilderment. Where shall one turn?"

"Do you know what that feeling is that makes you, as you suppose, cry for the cats?" asked Mrs. Hardy with great gentleness.

While Eugene paused to frame a reply, she went on, "It is sympathy. You are beginning to understand, and you are on the high road that leads away from selfishness. Usually we begin with the human family and descend to the animals. You are going backward. Your pity for the cats makes you see in them something more than mere hairy creatures crawling over the ground, as you styled them the other day."

"I see in them suffering beings," said Eugene intensely. "Their situation is like mine." He stopped abruptly, and leaned his head on the arm that he had stretched out against the wall.

"When my husband was a lad he disliked animals and was cruel to them," said Mrs. Hardy. "Then he had a serious illness. Two kittens that his mother owned used to sit on his bed, and watch him affectionately. He got to love them; and now he has the kindest

heart for dumb animals, and also for men and women, of any man I know. Now I will leave you, for you are tired. Good-night, dear boy. God bless you;" and she went quietly away, and left him alone as she knew he wished to be.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SERGEANT TALKS OF WAR AND OTHER THINGS.

THE next morning Eugene was ill. He was not a very strong boy, and he had had more excitement and mental anxiety during the last few days than his slender frame and sensitive soul could withstand.

For some days he was obliged to keep his bed, where he was faithfully waited on by the keepers of his pretty prison.

Mrs. Hardy was the chief jailer; and although he uttered only polite conventional expressions of gratitude that she knew did not come from his heart, she felt sure that she would in time win her way into his stubborn affections.

"The great thing is to keep my temper with him," she said to her husband one day; "he is so provoking sometimes, without meaning to be so."

"All boys are," said the sergeant consolingly, "and most men and women too, for that matter. Nobody can keep their temper all the time. According to my doctrine, you lose it just as seldom as you can; and when you do, don't kick up a fuss about it, but just do some little thing that lets people know you're sorry, and then take a fresh sheet and start over again."

"When I speak sharply to him, I think it my duty to apologize," said Mrs. Hardy.

"Now, Bess, none of that," said her husband, "if you don't want to get priggish. I know you. You're quick and sensitive, and you think you've got to say 'forgive me' every time you look the wrong way. That boy will despise you if you keep running to him with apologies. I used to know a fellow out West, Wash-house Billy we called him, because he was forever scrubbing himself — well, that chap was so self-righteous that every time he played a mean trick on any one, he'd go trotting after him with a 'forgive me' dropping from his lips. He got

knocked down one time for apologizing to a half-breed that wasn't used to it. Then he had to explain; and the half-breed swore at him, and said he didn't want any of his half-cooked words. If he was sorry, let him act it. Deeds, not words, were what he wanted. The rest of us were very glad; for Washhouse Billy had got into the bad habit of treating us all as mean as pickpockets, because he was always ready to jump from his low trick to his high one, and we were so dumfounded by his prig religion that we hadn't the spirit to knock him down as the half-breed did. If the boy provokes you, he deserves a snub."

"He isn't provoking," said Mrs. Hardy warmly, "except occasionally. He's the sweetest boy, Stephen, and he is going to make a fine man I am sure; and he asks the quaintest questions while he lies in bed with his big black eyes following me round the room."

"Is he getting up to-day?"

"Yes; he will be out in a few minutes."

The sergeant went on with his dinner, and

did not look up until Eugene came into the room. "How are you?" he said. "I haven't seen you before to-day. Don't you want to put on your cap, and come to the park with me?"

"I will go with pleasure," replied Eugene. Before he could get to the hall, Mrs. Hardy had run there, and had brought his cap, which she dropped lightly on his head.

Eugene lifted it off; then, as if to apologize to her for not donning it until he reached the door, he bent over her hand, and lifting it to his lips, kissed it without speaking.

It was the first caress he had given her, and her face flushed with pleasure as she stood looking after him. "He has such pretty foreign ways," she murmured. "I wish he would love me."

"It is agreeable to be able to walk out once more," said Eugene, drawing a long breath, as he sauntered slowly along by the side of the sergeant.

The man looked down at him in a kindly fashion. "You'll be all right now," he said,

"and you must spend a lot of time outside. Why, here's the king coming to meet us; we must be late to-day."

The cat turned, and walked by the side of the sergeant, occasionally sniffing at the paper parcels he carried in his hand.

"Will you have the kindness to stop for a minute?" asked Eugene suddenly.

"What's the matter?" said the sergeant.

The boy pointed to the bust of John Boyle O'Reilly that they were approaching. "Some one has put fresh flowers there," he said excitedly. "I have been ill and detained from doing it. Who is it?"

"My wife and your jailer. She knows about your liking for the emperor and O'Reilly, and she comes here with a bouquet every morning before you're up."

"Does she do this to please me?"

"For no other reason that I know of."

Eugene was silent for a short time as if he were working out some problem. Then he said earnestly, "Have you ever found her deceitful?"

"Not as yet," said the sergeant cheerfully. "Of course we never know how folks may turn out."

"No; one never does," said Eugene with a sigh.

"Generally speaking, we turn out as we begin," said the man. "There's a fine opening for a sermon, my boy, only I'm not good at preaching. You'll have to draw your own conclusions."

Eugene gave him a long and scrutinizing look: then he said, with a compassionate glance at King Boozy who was mewing coaxingly about the bags, "Suppose we proceed."

"All right, my boy;" and the sergeant walked nimbly on until they reached the cats' dining-room under the shrubbery, where he spread on the ground a sheet of brown paper, and emptied on it a medley of chicken and beef bones. Then drawing a tin can from among the leaves, he filled it with milk from a bottle in his pocket.

King Boozy mewed to his chum Squirrel; and the two cats crouched down beside their

THE TWO CATS CROUCHED BESIDE THEIR USUAL BOARD

festal board, and daintily proceeded to eat up everything.

"Do you do this every day?" asked Eugene.

"Every day as regular as the sun."

"It is a thoughtfulness on the part of the city to provide for homeless beasts."

"The city! bless you, my boy, the city doesn't do it."

"Do you supply this food yourself?" asked Eugene in surprise.

"Yes, young sir; why not?"

"For cats, for vermin, or what I was formerly accustomed to call vermin?" continued the boy in polite astonishment.

"Vermin must live," said the sergeant. "Brute vermin protect the human vermin. If I had time I'd tell you some of the uses of cats; but I haven't, and I guess you'd get bored if I had. Let us go down to the lower cat-house. I have some more food in this other bag."

"Unless you are a rich man," said Eugene as they entered a shady path, "I think that the city should feed the cats that serve it."

"The city might if it was asked," said the sergeant good-naturedly; "but I'd like to see myself sending in a requisition for cats' meat. It only costs a few dollars a week to feed them."

Eugene murmured an almost indistinct reply, and fell into a brown study that lasted until they reached the second colony of cats.

"You musn't walk any farther," said the sergeant, after he had scattered the second supply of food on the ground, and the cats had come scampering and cuffing each other aside to reach it. "Come into the office and rest. I have to wait here a while."

Eugene went with him into a little wooden building, and sat down by the window where he could watch the animals outside. "Their coats are very thick," he said musingly, "or is it that they are sticking out their hairs?"

"No; their coats are really heavy. They get that way after they have lived out-doors for some time."

"Have these animals all been cast out by some one?"

"Every man Jack of them," said the sergeant; "cast out, or frightened out, or scolded out, or kicked out. They come mewing and cringing to this park, most of them scared out of their lives, only here and there a bold one."

"Unfortunates," said Eugene bitterly, "it would be better for them to die."

"They think it more fun to live and have a good time. They don't mind dependence. Bless you, we've all got to be looked after. Where would I be if I hadn't my wife to take care of me? what would she do without me?"

"Have no thought for her," said Eugene magnificently. "If misfortune befalls you, I shall take her under my protection."

The sergeant stared hard at the cats, and tried not to smile.

"After my fortune comes from France, I shall remember you," said Eugene.

"Thank you," replied the sergeant demurely. "May I ask you whether you intend remaining in this country?"

"Yes: I shall not live under that villanous republic. My grand-uncle will send me not the whole, he is too avaricious for that, but a part of the fortune that rightfully belongs to me. I shall go to a military school, of which I am assured there are good ones in this country; then, when I become a man, the republic of France will probably be no more. We shall have our empire, and I shall return, and take service under the Bonapartes."

"You are quite sure that your grand-uncle will send you some money?"

At this remark Eugene turned such a startled face toward his companion that the latter, finding that he had surprised the boy out of his usual composure, made haste to change the subject of conversation.

"So you want to be a soldier," he said.

"Yes; it is the only profession for a gentleman."

"Napoleon made a pretty big thing of war," said the sergeant.

"Oh! an enormous thing. I should like to

be a second Napoleon;" and Eugene's eyes sparkled.

"I don't take much stock in war," said the sergeant.

"Do you mean that you would not fight?"

"No; I mean I don't like it."

"You do not — how very extraordinary. How does it happen?"

"Because I've been in it."

"You have seen active service, have been in engagements," exclaimed Eugene. "Oh! why did you not tell me?"

"It never occurred to me," said the sergeant; "and unlike most men I'm not fond of talking of it."

"Your rank," said Eugene feverishly, "and the country you fought in, will you not tell me?"

"Rank, drummer-boy; country, my own native land and its last war; enemies, brothermen. Boy, I don't like war."

"Why not, oh, why not?"

"I'll tell you presently. You tell me first what your idea of war is."

"We have a picture of my great-grandfather in white huzzar uniform," said Eugene enthusiastically. "He is magnificent. In the hall of our château in France hangs also a painting of my great-great-grandfather, mounted on his charger Austerlitz. He waves his arm in the air; he encourages his men. They are about to charge the enemy. He reminds them that they fight for their country, their emperor — oh! it makes one's blood stir to look at it."

"That's mostly the picture outsiders draw," said the sergeant mildly. "They always fancy handsome officers, stainless uniforms, a lot of enemies waiting somewhere to be cut down like sheep. It's all glory and paint and a lot of big figures in histories and newspapers. But there's another side to it after you've been in a battle. In the first place, I should say war is a dirty thing."

"A dirty thing," said Eugene wonderingly. "What is that for an epithet?"

"It's a suitable one," replied the sergeant coolly. "In the first place, war is dirty; in the second, it's low; and in the third, it's needless."

"I do not understand you:" and Eugene made a gesture expressive of slight contempt.

"Look here," said the sergeant, dragging his chair up to the table, and bringing a lead-pencil from a drawer. "Here on this side of the table imagine gray men, imagine blue there. They haven't one earthly thing against each other, but they've got to rend and tear each other's mortal bodies to preserve the independence of the Union. The subject of their dispute is a grand one, a glorious one; and if there wasn't any other way to settle it they'd have to whack each other, and beat the life out of each other's bodies, but there is another way."

"Wars must take place," said Eugene firmly. "My grandfather asserts it."

"Your grandfather is — that is, you are mistaken. Wars don't need to take place. In the late one in this country, when we were all seething hotheads, why didn't we apply to foreign countries to settle our dispute?"

"Arbitration — ah! that is not for gentlemen," said the boy proudly.

The sergeant smiled. "Lad," he said, "you're just like all the rest of growing things. You have got to learn for yourself. You won't take a leaf out of any other body's book. Do you believe me when I say that if you were to enlist to-day, and go on the field to-morrow, that your little body would quiver and shake, and you'd want to turn tail and run, like one of those cats, when you heard the big guns?"

"I would never run."

"Possibly you might not," said the sergeant amiably. "I'm not going to say that all men do, though I believe most men want to. Well, we'll say you've got through the first engagement, and have a nice undangerous wound in the fleshy part of your leg. You'd admire the battlefield, wouldn't you, and the agony of men and horses heaped up, and you'd go to the hospital and see the wounded, and smell the sickening smells, and enjoy yourself?"

"A soldier must look on blood."

"Yes, he must — tears and blood. Why, lad, if all the women that lost husbands and

fathers and lovers could hover over a battle-field, there would be a good sharp shower like rain on it."

"It is necessary for women to cry," remarked Eugene.

"Yes; that's true. I guess men would be a little better to shed tears now and again. Well, lad, I hope no woman will ever have to cry because your body has been made a target of. I hope, too, that you'll never be stood up and have an awful moment when you wonder what in the name of common-sense you have done, or your ancestors have done, that you shouldn't be allowed to live out this life, which is tricky anyway, but should be set up for a plaything, not for butchers, but for decent human beings, that haven't the faintest bit of spite against you. But good gracious, I'm preaching a sermon, which is always against my principles."

"I like to talk of war," said Eugene; "it makes me feel warm. You have of course read of Napoleon and his glorious campaigns?"

The sergeant nodded. Eugene had turned

his back to the window, and sat confronting him with flaming cheeks. He had forgotten the very existence of the cats.

"He was the greatest soldier the world has ever seen," pursued the lad.

"Well, granted he was," said the sergeant, "what did he get out of it?"

"Glory, honor, victory, and reputation for France."

"And a lonely prison without a razor to shave his upper lip, according to you," said the sergeant, "though I think you are rather hard on England in that."

"At the last, yes," said Eugene; "but his career up to that was magnificent."

"I don't see the magnificence of it," said the sergeant. "He set all Europe by the ears; he stirred up the kings and emperors; he turned things topsy-turvy, and in the end left France no better than he found her. His ambition was too big for his little body. He should have stopped half way in his course."

"You do not understand," said Eugene impatiently.

"And he strewed dead Frenchmen all over Europe," said the sergeant, "and not one-half of them knew what they were fighting about. What do you think of the retreat from Moscow, my boy?"

"A splendid failure. But the emperor did not know all things. How could he tell what was going to be?"

"I'll come back to my starting-point," said the sergeant. "I believe we're put on this earth — cats and dogs and beasts and men — to be happy. Any one or anything that lifts his hand against his brother throws the whole world out of tune. A man that kills anybody or any creature without cause is a murderer — I don't care who he is that does it; and that's the sum of the whole thing, according to me, and I'm not going to say another word. You run home like a good lad, or the wife will be getting worried about you. We'll talk of these things another time."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE KING TO THE RESCUE.

On a yellow, dreamy day of late autumn, while the sergeant was strolling through the Fens, he came suddenly upon little Virgie Manning and her nurse.

"Hello, little miss!" said the sergeant. "I haven't seen you for a long time; but where did you get those flowers? They look like some of the park golden-rod."

"Yes," said Virgie in her half-lisping voice; "they are your flowers, Mr. Policeman."

"But you musn't pick the park flowers," said the sergeant.

"And sure I told her that myself," said Bridget. "Now, missy, you see what happens to naughty girls. Are you going to take her to prison, Mr. Officer?"

Virgie laughed gleefully. She was not at all afraid of the sergeant.

"No, not this time," he said.

"Mr. Policeman," said Virgie, "one time long ago weren't you a weeny boy?"

"Yes, I was."

"Did you love the pretty flowerses?"

"Yes, I did."

"And you picked them," said Virgie, "and naughty big men scolded you?"

"No, they didn't; I lived in the country."

"Then, you mustn't scold me," said Virgie gayly. "O Bridget! there is a big, big fly with blue wingses. You stand still like a mousie while I catch it, 'cause if you runned you might starkle it;" and she darted away.

"And is the French boy still making his home with you, sir?" asked Bridget curiously.

"Yes; he is still with us."

"And he doesn't hear from his bad old uncle in France, Virtue Ann tells me."

"No; he hasn't as yet," said the sergeant.

"And it's a great comfort to Virtue Ann that you've shielded him," continued Bridget, "otherwise she'd have cold comfort in the

good place she's found for herself. 'Virtue Ann,' said I, 'if you despise your luck this time, you'll be guilty of the sin of onprudency. Make seven crosses, and let the boy go, and you'll find you're in the right of it.'"

"The boy is always glad to see her," said the sergeant absently. "Hello, Boozy, what's the matter?"

"And sure that's a queer cat," said Bridget, eying the black-and-white animal who was mewing excitedly, and walking up and down at a little distance from them.

"He wants to show me something, and badly too," said the sergeant, "or he wouldn't come so near a woman. Go on, Boozy, I'll follow."

At this moment little Virgie came running up crying, "The naughty fly flewed away. He wouldn't play wif me. Oh! there's the sweet pussy;" and she precipitated herself toward Boozy.

The king was in great distress. He sprang nimbly from side to side, waving his tail angrily in the air as he tried to elude the

little girl's caresses, and at the same time keep the attention of the sergeant fixed on himself.

"I understand you, Boozy," said the sergeant. "Walk on, and I'll come. Look here, little girl, you stop chasing him, will you, and take my hand? We'll see what he's leading us to."

"Perhaps he has some little kittens to show us," suggested Virgie.

"No; the king isn't fond of kittens. Probably it's a mole or a mouse he's caught, or perhaps his chum is in trouble. One day he was caught in a wire fence, and Boozy came for me to let him free. Can you trot along a little faster, he seems to be in a hurry?"

"Yes," said the child, hopping and skipping along by his side, her blue eyes wandering to and fro across the broad avenue. "Where's Eugene?" she asked suddenly. "Virgie hasn't seen him for lots and lots of time."

"He's in the park somewhere," said the sergeant. "He spends a great deal of time here. He has taken a great fancy to Boozy,

and sits for hours watching him. I guess the cat teaches him a good many lessons."

"The king is a good pussy," remarked Virgie sagely.

"He is not perfect, but he is about as good as a cat can be," said her companion.

Virgie stopped to pick up some shining pebbles from the ground, but the sergeant hurried her on. "Make haste, little girl, if you want to come with me. There's something queer about the king's actions. See how he is running."

Virgie trotted along beside him again, and her nurse quickened her footsteps so that she might keep up with the two figures ahead of her.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed the sergeant, suddenly dropping the child's hand, and scrambling down a slope beside them; "just look at that boy."

"The boy! and sure there's no boy to be seen," said Bridget, who had heard his exclamation, and paused in surprise at the top of the little hill, and looked about her.

Just below them was a marshy, sedgy pond. A few ducks were dabbling in the mud at one end of it, and at the other end something brown and indistinct was moving in a slow and confused way among the rushes.

"I guess it's Eugene," cried little Virgie, tearfully clasping her tiny hands. "I guess he runned and frowed hisself in the water."

"Hush, lovie," said her nurse, putting her arm around her. "There isn't much water here, it's mostly mud, nor any boy for that matter. Watch and see what the quare thing is."

The indistinct figure kept going to and fro, slightly disturbing the rushes, while the sergeant rushed back and forth over the encircling firm ground as if looking for something.

"And sure he's crazy," muttered Bridget. Then she tried to hush Virgie, who was crying apprehensively.

"Do you see a rope anywhere up there?" shouted the sergeant. "I had one here this morning. Some rascal must have taken it."

Bridget ran about a little among the under-

brush. "No, sir," she called back; "there's not a shadow of a rope nor a bit of a plank here."

"Then, I'll have to go in myself," said the sergeant in a disgusted voice. "Eugene, can't you walk out? Come this way. You can see me, can't you?"

"Oh, the blessed saints presarve us!" cried Bridget, "that quare round thing is the head of the boy; and it's mud he is — and there's an arm sticking out — and now he's almost gone."

Little Virgie gave a shriek. Eugene was indeed sinking more deeply into the marsh that would soon close its lips over him if he should fall down. The sergeant made one brief exclamation, and snatching off his coat and his helmet threw them on the ground. Then he waded in to the spot where Eugene had been staggering about, and stretching out an arm he drew him out toward the dry ground.

"May I be forgiven for laughing," said Bridget, clutching Virgie by the hand, and hurrying down the grassy bank, "but I nivver saw such a soight in my life — and sure the

EUGENE WAS SINKING MORE DEEPLY INTO THE MARSH.

boy is brown from the top of his head to the sole of his foot. Mr. Officer, he hasn't fainted, has he?"

"He's half choked with the mud and the slime," said the sergeant dryly. "Lend me your handkerchief, will you?"

He was bending over Eugene, whom he had laid on the ground. Rapidly and skilfully he wiped the boy's face, and cleaned his head with leaves from a shrub near by.

"Take, please take my little hankershniff," gasped Virgie, extending a microscopic bit of cambric.

To please her the sergeant wiped Eugene's eyes with it; then he said, "Can you speak now, boy?"

Eugene struggled to a sitting posture, and stared solemnly from under sticky eyelashes at them.

Bridget tried not to laugh; but she was not used to controlling herself, and she had also been a little frightened. She began with a little squeal, then she became hysterical, and laughed and cried in the same breath.

"If ye's could only see yourselves," she said spasmodically; "so gummed up, like two alligators. I ask yer pardon humbly, but it's too ludicrous that ye are — and that boy that's always like a picture, so nate and clane, and yerself, Mr. Officer, that wears the fine uniform — sure, you're worse than the men in the subway with the clay trousers."

The sergeant smiled grimly. "I don't wonder you're amused," he said. "Tell me, Eugene, how you got into this pickle."

The boy cleaned two of his fingers on the grass, and took a last remnant of earth from his mouth. "It was my cap that I was after," he said. "The wind blew it among the rushes. I went to get it on what I thought was a point of green grass. It was soft mud beneath. I went in to my ankles, and I could with difficulty draw my feet out. Then I walked the wrong way, and fell into a deep hole. When I rose, I found myself in to my waist, and bewildered and sinking."

"Why did you not stand still and call for help?" asked the sergeant. "There are always people about."

"I should have felt like a coward," said Eugene, proudly holding up his mud-plastered head.

"I don't think it would have been as cowardly to call for assistance as to drop down there and smother to death," said the sergeant.

"I thought of the emperor," said Eugene. "'Why do you duck your head?' he once asked a soldier who bent to avoid a round shot. 'If your fate is not there you might as well stand up straight. If it is there, it will find you though you bury yourself one hundred feet in the earth.'"

"All very fine," said the sergeant; "but at the same time, Napoleon wasn't the man to stick in a mud-hole while he had a good voice in his body that would help him out. Come, boy, we had better make our way home if you feel up to it, and get rid of these clothes before the mud dries on us."

"And it's home we'll have to be going too," said Bridget in a disapproving voice. She had not been able to keep her warm-hearted little charge from embracing her muddy play-

mate, and Virgie's red cloak was in consequence disfigured by a number of dark streaks.

"I wish to hug the good pussy," said Virgie, drawing back as she caught sight of King Boozy, who sat on the bridge above, watching them.

The sergeant laughed. "Boozy hates dirt and disorder. He did his share of the work, then retired to watch us. Was he with you, boy, when your cap blew off?"

"Yes," said Eugene; "he was following me as I walked to and fro on the path."

"And when he saw you were stuck, he came for me," said the sergeant. "He is the most knowing cat I ever saw. Hello, here's a cart coming just in good time to give us a lift. You look fagged out, Eugene. Give me your hand; now jump in."

"Good-by, dear Eugene," called Virgie. "If you don't play in the naughty mud any more, Virgie won't frow stones at your remperor;" and she threw kisses to him until he was out of sight.

"The missis will be astonished to see us,"

said the sergeant, as they jogged along in the cart," but she'll have us cleaned up in no time. Boy," and he looked slyly at Eugene, "you didn't like cats much when you came to us. Would you mind telling me your private opinion of them now?"

A smile flitted over Eugene's weary, dirty face. "A human being could have done no more for me this morning than the king did," he said simply.

CHAPTER IX.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ ARRIVES.

THE sergeant usually spent his evenings at home. All day long he was on his feet; and it was a pleasure to him when he came in at night to settle himself in a comfortable armchair, after he had his supper, and devote himself to some interesting book until bedtime.

He often read aloud to his wife, who sat and sewed beside him; and one evening, after he had been reading for some time, he laid his book face downward on the small table before him, and said, "Where is the boy?"

Mrs. Hardy dropped her work, and moved aside the lamp that partly hid her husband's face from her. "He is in his room," she said.

"He usually listens to me," said the sergeant; "he isn't moping, is he, or offended at anything?"

"Oh, no! he never does that now," laughed Mrs. Hardy. "He is as cheerful as possible.

"Queer, isn't it," said the sergeant, "how any one gets used to anything? Does he ever speak to you about hearing from France?"

"Not now; he used to when he first came. He thinks of it, though."

"How do you know?"

"Oh! I can tell. I understand him so well."

"How long is it since he came here?"

"Five weeks last Wednesday."

"It doesn't seem as long as that," said the sergeant thoughtfully.

"The time passes more quickly with a child in the house," observed his wife.

"I believe it does. I'm not sorry we took him, Bess."

"I know you are not, Stephen. I would send him away if I thought you were."

Her husband sent her an affectionate glance, but made no remark for some time. Then he said, "What are you doing?"

"Darning a pillow-case; it is getting old."

"Why don't you buy some new ones?"

"I must economize now," she said. "It takes more to keep us since the boy came."

"But you will have plenty by and by."

"We haven't it yet, Stephen. One can't count on the future."

"I believe it is a pleasure to you," he said under his breath.

His wife caught the word pleasure, and said, "What did you say, Stephen?"

"I believe you like to scrimp yourself for any one you like."

"Of course I do," she said, laughing, and tossing her white head. "I should only be half a woman if I didn't."

"He is a handsome lad, isn't he?" said the sergeant.

"Indeed he is. Every one looks at him in the street. Wasn't it a joke that old Mrs. Purdy should think he was our boy? I shall never forget the way Eugene looked at her when she fell on his neck, and said he was the image of his father."

"She is getting old and stupid," said the sergeant indulgently, "and forgets things.

Hello, here's our young man," as Eugene came quietly into the room. "What have you been doing, son?"

"I was reading," said Eugene; "that is," he added hesitatingly, as he met Mrs. Hardy's scrutinizing glance, "I was looking beyond my history lesson for to-morrow."

"Your first statement is true," said Mrs. Hardy quietly. "If you were only reading, you were not studying. I don't care to have him learn lessons in the evening," she said in an explanatory tone to her husband, "because it tires him."

"No child should study in the evening," said the sergeant gruffly.

"I wished to find out what Washington did when he became a man," said Eugene.

"You like to read about the father of this country, don't you?" asked Mrs. Hardy.

"I do. I admire him. He was a great man," said the boy.

"Greater than Napoleon?" inquired the sergeant mischievously.

Mrs. Hardy gently pushed his foot under

the table when she saw Eugene's disturbed face, but the sergeant would not recall his question.

"No, no, not greater," said the boy at length, "not greater; I cannot forget my emperor; but General Washington was better. He loved more his fellow-men."

"Bravo!" said the sergeant; "you'll make a first-class citizen of the United States yet."

"Never," said Eugene abruptly.

The sergeant and his wife looked earnestly at him.

"I shall be a Frenchman always," said Eugene vehemently. "I may never see my country again; but I love her — I would die for her;" and he grew deathly pale, as he always did when he was much moved.

"That's right," said the sergeant. "The world wants more boys like you. Always stand up for your own country, but be charitable to others. France is a wide word, my boy, but there's a wider."

"You mean America?"

"No; I mean the world."

"I like America," said Eugene; "but I detest England."

"There's where you're wrong," said the sergeant. "If I hated England, I should feel like a child hating my mother. They're a magnificent nation over there; though sometimes they provoke us, and sometimes we provoke them. However, they'll stand more goading from us than they will from any other people on the face of the earth. Just you make a note of that, my boy. You'll find it's true some day, and then you will appreciate them."

"Possibly," said Eugene; "in the day that I tolerate the republic in France."

"Queer little lad," said the sergeant, affectionately laying a hand on Eugene's smooth head. "You can't look ahead and see yourself a tolerant man?"

Eugene rarely let a question go unanswered. He had been brought up to reply to every remark addressed to him; but seeing he had some difficulty in answering this, the sergeant went on. "I can. You have a fair start toward

making a first-class, — what is it they call those people that are at home among all nations, — oh, yes, a cosmopolite. Wife, suppose I go on with my reading?"

"Yes, do," she replied, as the sergeant again took up his book.

Eugene sat down at a little distance from him, and listened attentively to a tale of far-away Africa. Mrs. Hardy listened, too, for a short time; then she laid down her work and gazed attentively, first at the boy on the sofa, and then at her husband beside her. Something stirred softly in her heart as she looked at these two beings, — her husband and her adopted son. For them she felt that she could endure any hardship, any privation. If the occasion should arise, she felt that she could even lay down her life for them.

"I used to think that I was happy, but I am happier now," she murmured. "My love for my husband makes me love the boy more, and my love for the boy makes me love my husband more."

Eugene, as if aware that her attention was

concentrated on him, began to fidget in a sensitive way, then he got up and moved to a chair next her. She took his hand in hers, and the boy leaned his head against her shoulder while he again listened to the reading.

At last the sergeant put down the book. "Wife," he said, "it is half-past nine."

"I will go to bed," said Eugene, rising immediately. "Good-night, Mrs. Hardy."

"Good-night, my dear boy," she said, "my son."

A curious look came over the boy's face. He colored, looked confused, and she thought that his parted lips were forming the word "mother," when suddenly her two cats, who were usually taken with a spirit of mischief about bedtime, sprang at her workbasket, and by upsetting it diverted her attention from Eugene.

He laughed in the merry way that he had learned since coming to her house; and at once he and the sergeant and the cats engaged in a frolic, and by turns chased each other and the spools of thread that went rolling all over the floor.

Mrs. Hardy stood looking at them with a smile on her face when, in the midst of their fun, they heard a ring at the door-bell.

Eugene jumped up. "Allow me to open the door," he said in his pretty, courteous way; and Mrs. Hardy stood aside to let him pass.

The parlor door remained open; and to her surprise she heard from the hall, first an eager exclamation from Eugene, then a succession of rapid French sentences.

"Who is there?" said the sergeant, turning his red face toward her.

"I cannot imagine. Wait! Eugene is bringing the person in."

At that minute the boy appeared in the doorway, ushering in a tall, very foreign-looking, brown-faced man, clad in a black cassock.

The boy's cheeks were blazing, and his eyes were excited. "Mrs. Hardy," he said in a repressed voice, "permit me to present to you monsieur le curé Déjoux of Châtillon-sur-Loir. I have told him in the hall that it is with you that I have found refuge. Enter, monsieur."

The sergeant flashed a quick glance at his wife. How would she stand this? The priest probably came to take her darling back to France. To his relief she was perfectly calm, though clearly surprised. She looked without consternation into the grave, kindly, almost childish face of the stranger.

The sergeant pressed forward, and shook hands with his caller; then wondering that his cassock should be so handsome, and his boots so clumsy, and his bare, ungloved hands so brown, he pointed to a chair, and begged him to be seated.

The curé bowed once more in a paternal manner, and sitting down, looked at Eugene, who stood at his elbow with glittering eyes that scarcely moved from his face.

"You are here, I take it, from the boy's grand-uncle," said the sergeant, coming directly to the object of his caller's visit.

The priest did not understand a word of what he said. He spread out his hands, then turned to Eugene, who had at last ceased to hover about him, and had dropped on a stool by his side.

"Monsieur understands English," said the boy, "if you will speak slowly. Is it not so?"

The priest smiled, and showed a good set of white teeth. "Yes," he said in a stumbling voice. "Vairy, vairy slow."

"You — have — come — for — Eugene, I suppose," said the sergeant spasmodically.

"I comprehand *parfaitement*," returned the priest. It ees true, I come to seek heem."

"It is getting late now," said Mrs. Hardy with a glance at the clock, "and Eugene will be too much fatigued to sleep. Suppose we put off our business conversation till the morning, and talk of other things."

The priest turned his gentle face toward his hostess. He had not understood what she said.

Eugene put her sentences into liquid French for him; and he made a gesture of assent, and said in laborious English, "Madame has right."

"Ah, no," said Eugene; "I could not sleep. With Mrs. Hardy's permission, let us talk a long, long time. Tell me of France, dear

monsieur le curé. Are you still in the little village below the château?"

"Steel there, excep' when I voyage in Amérique," said the priest in peaceful amusement. "Nevair have I voyage before."

"And my uncle received my letter?" said Eugene.

"He deed," said the priest seriously.

"And he showed it to you?"

"No, no; he deed not that."

"Did he tell you what I had written?" asked Eugene.

"No, my chile."

"He was angry, for example?"

"Well angry, leetle one. Thou deed write wrong, ees it not?"

"Possibly I did," said Eugene with a shrug of his shoulders; and for the first time Mrs. Hardy found her suspicion verified that the boy had had some prickings of conscience about the letter that he had written to his grand-uncle.

"Thy onkel has many cheeldren," said the curé amiably.

"He has but a son and a daughter," rejoined Eugene hastily.

"But the cheeldren's cheeldren," said the priest, expanding his hands. "Many they are, like the birds of the feelds."

"Therefore," said Mrs. Hardy slowly, "he cannot do much for Eugene. Is that what you wish to say?"

"Pardon, madame," said the curé.

Eugene explained what she meant, and the priest assented by a profound bow.

"But he has sent me money," said Eugene, frowning slightly. "Much money, has he not, monsieur le curé?"

The curé shook his head. "He has sent me—not money. Monsieur thy onkel wishes," and he directed his remark to Mrs. Hardy, "that thees dear boy return to hees country."

"Pause a moment, monsieur le curé," said Eugene urgently, "and pardon me, Mrs. Hardy, though it is not civil to speak a language you do not understand, but I cannot wait;" and then ensued a brief colloquy between them in French.

The boy's face grew paler and paler, and his manner quieter, as they proceeded, while the curé became flushed and eloquent.

"Eugene is suffering, poor lad. I wonder what the priest is saying," murmured Mrs. Hardy.

At last the conversation was over. The expression of hope and animation that had illumined the boy's countenance when he greeted the curé had all died away. He was composed now, and almost sullen.

"All is over," he said with a despairing gesture; "my uncle renounces me."

The curé, who was listening eagerly to him, caught the word "renounce."

"Eugene," he interposed gravely, "thou deceivest also thyself and thy friends. Willst thou explain?"

Eugene turned to the Hardys, and said in a dull voice, "My grand-uncle offers me a pittance which I do not receive unless I go to France — not to live with him," bitterly, "ah, no, but with monsieur the curé."

"It seems to me from what I have heard

you say," remarked the sergeant, "that you would not care to take up your abode with your uncle."

"I would never live with him," said Eugene proudly; "yet he should offer to have me inhabit the château which should be mine."

"Would you not like to live with this gentleman?" asked Mrs. Hardy in a tense voice.

Eugene turned his pain-stricken face toward her. When the curé had first appeared, the lad had immediately assumed a patronizing air toward the two people who had been as adopted parents to him. Now, however, his pride was all gone. His grand expectations from his uncle were not to be realized. He felt himself to be a poor, despised boy.

"What does it matter whether I like it or not," he said with a bitter smile. "I am obliged to go to France. I must live with this good man, but I fear that I shall be a torment to him. However, some day I shall revenge myself on my uncle. I shall study it."

"Eugene," said Mrs. Hardy suddenly, "you must go to bed; you are not yourself."

"You will spend the night with us, will you not?" said the sergeant hospitably to their visitor."

The priest said that it would be "too much pleasure," that he had "conveyed" his travelling-bag to a near hotel, and that he was sorry to have "deranged" them by coming so late, but he had been detained by a search for Eugene in his old quarters.

"That doesn't matter," said the sergeant; "better late than never. I'll go with you and get your bag, and we can put you up here."

The priest overwhelmed him with thanks; and while the sergeant went for his hat, he looked about the pleasant room, and said appreciatively, "Ah, but you are well *cossu* here."

"What does he mean?" asked Mrs. Hardy.

"It is like a bean in a soft pod," said Eugene. "One uses the word in France. This house is indeed a palace compared with the

house of the poor curé," he went on, after the priest had uttered a cheerful *au revoir* and had disappeared with the sergeant.

"What is his house like?" asked Mrs. Hardy curiously.

"Châtillon-sur-Loir is a small village," replied Eugene. "There is a broad green in the centre of it. On one side in a thatched cottage lives the curé with old Jeanne his servant. He has only a few pieces of furniture. He drinks but little wine, mostly water or mallow tea; and he eats black bread, for the white is dear. He wears an old cotton cassock; the one that he has on is probably a gift from my grand-aunt, who is pious. And he gives away everything, even the wood for his stove. He goes from his cottage to the chapel where he officiates; he visits the peasants who are stupid. He saunters to and fro on the green, reading his breviary or the *Figaro*. Oh, it is a charming existence!"

Mrs. Hardy suppressed a smile. "You would be less unhappy with us," she said.

Eugene looked at her quickly.

"Why not stay with us?" she murmured caressingly. "You know that we love you, and would consider you our child if you would let us."

"Oh, no, no!" said Eugene, raising his hands as if he were putting some temptation from him. "Do not mention this, for it is among the impossible things."

"Good-night," she said abruptly; and she kissed him tenderly, and then pushed him from her. "Go, get into your little bed, but remember this when you are getting there, — that there is always one heart open to you, one home ready for you. Whether you go to France or stay here I shall always look upon you as my boy."

Eugene paused. Then he seized her hand, and pressed it warmly to his lips before he rushed from the room. There were tears on the hand when he dropped it, and Mrs. Hardy sat looking at it steadfastly until her husband came in.

"I just slipped the stranger into his room, Bess," he said. "I knew everything was ready

for him, and I thought I wouldn't bother bringing him in here again; for we folks who have to get up early want to get to bed early. What's the matter? You're not worrying, are you?"

"No, Stephen; it seems to me I shall never worry again."

"Well, you're a queer little woman," he rejoined. "You worry when I don't expect it, and when I do, you don't."

"There's nothing to worry about in this case," she said.

"That's odd. I thought you'd be struck all of a heap. I nearly was when I took in the situation."

"Do you suppose that child is going back to France?"

"I guess so. It looks like it. I've had a great talk with the priest. When I get him alone I can understand his lingo better. I got out of him some information about the de Vargas. He acknowledges that they're a proud, ugly-tempered kind of a family, and the young ones in it are as upsetting and unmanageable

as the old ones, which isn't usual among French children. The grand-uncle is furious with this boy. He'll not have an easy time in France. The old man won't have the boy live in the château because he has the name of being unmanageable, and he would talk his Bonapartism, which isn't fashionable in the neighborhood. Bess, what is the difference between the old *noblesse* and the new?"

"I don't know exactly. We'll have to read about France, Stephen."

"The priest says that the de Vargas belong to the new. He says if the boy was willing it would be far better for him to remain in this country, for he will be sure to get himself into trouble in France; but he knows he won't stay here, so he is planning to take him back and keep an eye on him. He says he'll try to squeeze money enough out of the grand-uncle to send him away to school. What are you smiling about?"

"Stephen," said Mrs. Hardy gently but decidedly, "that boy belongs to us. He will live and die in this country."

"Are you crazy, Bess?"

"No, I'm not. They may take him away, but he'll come back. I doubt if he even consents to leave this city."

The sergeant was surprised. "You are a funny little woman," he said shortly. "What makes you say that?"

"Because he loves us," she said triumphantly. "I never was sure of it till this evening. There's no one that he likes in France. He will stay where his heart is, or if he goes away he will come back to us."

"Maybe you're right and maybe you're wrong," said the sergeant sagely. "Time will tell; but I guess he'll go to France and get used to it."

CHAPTER X.

A PROPOSAL OF MARRIAGE.

THE sergeant was intensely amused and interested in the French priest. He obtained a few days' leave from his duties, and occupied himself in showing his guest the sights of an American city. The innocence, the childishness, and the curiosity of his companion, and, above all, the attention that he attracted, provided the sergeant with the most agreeable sensation that he had had for many a day.

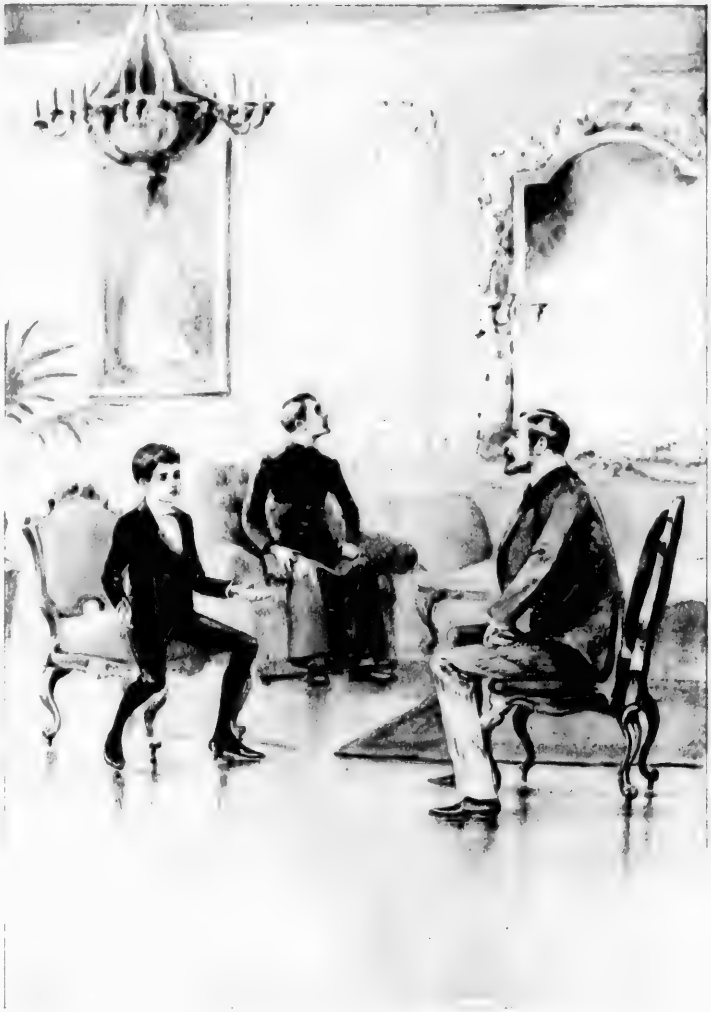
Eugene sometimes accompanied them, oftener he did not. He was no longer cheerful and contented, but had fallen into the reserved, quiet, almost sullen state in which he had been when Mrs. Hardy first knew him; and instead of mingling freely with the little family, he preferred to be left alone in his room, where he sat musing by the hour.

Occasionally he roused himself as the claims

of hospitality asserted themselves in his mind, and he politely endeavored to entertain the priest by conversations about French matters. To these conversations the sergeant lent a most attentive ear. He had an immense curiosity on the subject of foreign countries; and the precocious remarks of Eugene with regard to the peasant vote, the political clubs, and the rural life of the nobility in France, with the almost infantile responses of the curé to the boy's questions and unfathomable prejudices, formed subjects on which he would remember to inform himself after they were gone.

It had been definitely settled that Eugene and the priest were to leave Boston at the end of the week, and sail across the sea to France.

Mrs. Hardy rarely spoke of the boy's departure: but when she did, the reference was made cheerfully, and as if she expected that he would really go. In the meantime, when she could spare a few hours from her household duties, she busied herself with making preparations for his journey by adding to his rather scanty wardrobe. Eugene went shopping with



"I am come," said Eugene at last, "to demand the Hand of Your Daughter in Marriage."

her while the sergeant and the priest were engaged in sight-seeing.

Late in the afternoon of the day preceding the one on which they were to leave, Eugene took the curé aside, and requested his companionship while he made a call of importance.

"It is to see the father of the little Virgie," he said to Mrs. Hardy who was standing near.

"Oh, yes! I understand," she said; "you wish to say good-by to your small playmate."

Eugene did not wish to say good-by to his small playmate. However, he did not explain this to Mrs. Hardy, but simply gave her an inscrutable look from his deep black eyes, and walked out of the room with the priest.

It was a dark, chilly afternoon, and the priest shivered slightly inside his black cassock as they wended their way toward the broad and fashionable avenue where Virgie's parents lived. He was not accustomed to such piercing winds in sunny France; and he murmured softly to himself, "*Le climat de Loir-et-Cher est doux et tempéré.*"

Mr. Manning, Virgie's father, quite unaware of the visitors on their way to see him, had just come home from his office, and sat in his wife's room talking to her, and waiting for dinner to be announced, when a maid knocked at the door, and said that a priest and a boy wanted to see him. He glanced sharply at her, and asked, "What are their names?"

"I forget, sir," she said hesitatingly. "They were queer-sounding and foreign."

"I cannot see them," said Mr. Manning, settling himself back comfortably in his chair. "They are probably begging."

The maid went down-stairs to a small reception-room, and gave the strangers Mr. Manning's message.

"Return to your master, and say that I request an interview with him on the subject of business," said Eugene firmly.

The maid felt the strange power that the lad exerted on all those who came in contact with him; and throwing him a glance of veiled admiration, she again went up-stairs.

"Tell the boy that I talk business in my office," said Mr. Manning shortly. "Let him go there in the morning."

Eugene was not daunted by this message. "Repeat carefully my words," he said to the amused maid; and his eyes flamed as he looked at her. "To-morrow I shall be on my way to France. I have now a last chance to see the gentleman of this house. If he refuses, he may regret his loss."

The maid once more bent her footsteps toward the staircase, and on the way met Bridget, with whom she had a whispered colloquy.

"It's the little French boy, sir, that plays with Miss Virgie," she said on returning to Mr. Manning.

"Is it?" said the gentleman with a laugh. "He is going to get on in the world, whoever he is;" and he hurried down-stairs.

The priest and Eugene rose and bowed profoundly at the entrance of the little, short, sharp business man. His gray eyes took in their peculiarities at one glance; then, some-

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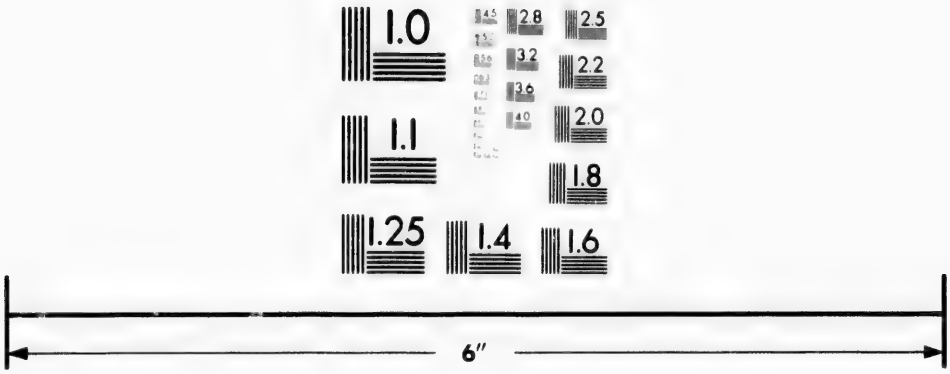

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what flattered by their obeisances, he responded by a nod of his head, and motioned them to be seated.

"You know my small daughter?" he asked, addressing Eugene.

"Sir, I have the honor of romping with her at times," said the boy solemnly.

"Indeed!" replied Mr. Manning with equal solemnity; then with a quick, brisk movement of his hand he brushed back the hair from his forehead, and looked out of the window.

Eugene, overcome by the knowledge of the importance of his mission, neither smiled nor tried to make himself agreeable in any way to this brusque man, but waited in sober patience for a sufficient time to elapse before the proper moment arrived to approach the object of his visit.

"It is a raw day," Mr. Manning said at last, addressing the priest.

A raw day was something quite beyond the curé's ken; so he made no attempt to reply to the remark, but bowed agreeably and kept silence.

"I hope that mademoiselle your daughter is well," said Eugene after a long pause.

"She is, thank you," said Mr. Manning; then he, too, relapsed into silence.

"I am come," said Eugene at last, seeing that the gentleman was politely yet stubbornly resolved not to enter into conversation with him, "supported by my friend monsieur le curé of Châtillon-sur-Loir, to demand the hand of mademoiselle your daughter in marriage."

Mr. Manning was a man who had attained to great self-possession; but at Eugene's astonishing request, he was again obliged to stroke his hair vigorously, and once more look out of the window.

Eugene contemplated him meanwhile in great satisfaction. This composed man of business would make an excellent father-in-law.

"May I ask," said Mr. Manning at length, abruptly bringing his attention once more to bear upon his guest, "whether this is for immediate or future marriage?"

"For the future," said Eugene quickly.

"How old are you?" asked the gentleman.

"I am thirteen, but I will be fourteen on my next birthday," replied the lad.

"Well, now, don't you think," said Mr. Manning in an almost coaxing tone of voice, "that you are rather young yet to consider so important a question as the choosing of your future wife?"

"Exceedingly young," said Eugene in an equally reasonable voice. "I am taking a part that is quite unusual, yet it suits me; for I am leaving this country, perhaps not to return for many years, therefore I beg you to grant me your best attention."

Mr. Manning stared at the curé, whom he was almost forgetting in his interest in Eugene. What kind of a man was this who, after he had attained to years of maturity, suffered a child to go about making himself ridiculous?

The curé, blissfully unconscious of this thought, and not understanding a word of what he said or of what Eugene said, sat gazing tranquilly out through the door of the

reception-room at the magnificence of two parlors across the hall. He, a poor priest, had never been in so handsome a house in his life. The stone château of the de Vargas, which was large, bare, and comfortless, could not be compared with this mansion. As a young man, he had gone from the cottage of his peasant father and mother to a seminary, and from thence to Paris for a few months, where he lived the life of a student. He had seen the exterior of fine hotels and palaces, but never had his feet trodden such velvety carpets, never had his limbs pressed such soft furniture, never had he been received as a visitor in the home of such a one as this small amiable gentleman, who was probably a merchant prince in this strange new country, and who talked to his young friend with brevity, and yet without the smallest tincture of haughtiness.

The curé beamed amiably at Mr. Manning, and not a suspicion of envy found lodgment in his gentle breast. He was delighted to see a man in possession of so much luxury. "I

felicitate you, sir," he murmured when Mr. Manning briefly asked him what relation he bore to Eugene.

"He cannot understand you, sir," interposed Eugene, "unless you speak French or slow American."

Mr. Manning made a gesture that significantly commended the curé to the pleasant company of his own thoughts. He was not the man to talk "slow American" when a few quick sentences would dispose of the business in hand.

"So you wish me to seriously consider your proposal, little boy," he said, again confronting Eugene.

"I do, sir."

"Well, then, give me your reasons for breaking through the custom of this country, which I suppose you know is not to arrange marriages until the contracting parties are of age."

"When they usually arrange them for themselves," continued Eugene.

Mr. Manning was excessively amused. "I see you know all about it," he said.

"This is my excuse for breaking through your habits," said Eugene earnestly. "I am noble; you are not. You might desire to have me for a son-in-law some day when I am no longer here, for I go to France to-morrow."

"Couldn't I write you a letter?" asked Mr. Manning.

"By the time of a few years I might form other arrangements; therefore, while I am here, where there are so few nobles, is it not better to secure me for mademoiselle your daughter?"

"Suppose mademoiselle my daughter didn't wish to marry you when she grew up?"

"Oh! but she would," said Eugene in great surprise. "Well-bred ladies are always arranged for in marriage in France, and they enjoy it. It would not be necessary to inform her until the time."

"I know you fix these things in a different way in France," said Mr. Manning with extraordinary seriousness; "but upon my word, I don't like to be the first to start the custom here."

"I am sure there would be no regret in the case," said Eugene warmly. "As little girls are concerned, Mademoiselle Virgie is one of the healthiest and the best-tempered. A suitable dowry being attached to her, she will have the benefit of my *beau nom*, as one says in France. And will she not rejoice to be madame la comtesse?"

"She will be too sensible a girl to hang her happiness on a title, I hope," said Mr. Manning; "and though you seem a decent enough boy now, you may grow up to be a scamp."

Eugene's little straight back grew more rigid than before. "I am a de Vargas," he said with an expression of proud and conscious superiority. "There are no scamps in our family."

Mr. Manning twisted his lips to conceal the inward laughter that was consuming him. "Granted that you are not going to be a scamp, how will you earn your bread?"

"By my sword."

"But there doesn't seem to be much use for swords nowadays. The sentiment of to-day is

against war; and I would rather have a whole son-in-law, not one that somebody is going to carve to pieces."

"But the army must be maintained. I shall be an officer, and hold myself ready for war."

"Oh! I see. Well, to come back to my starting-point, I don't like this plan. It's too one-sided, — too sure for you, too risky for my daughter."

"Are not American girls equal to French girls who do this?"

"Yes, I daresay; but I prefer an American husband for my child. I know that French people look out for money. You won't let your army officers marry without getting a certain amount with a wife, I have heard; but somehow or other the thing does not commend itself to me. I don't believe in marrying for money."

"But we do not do that," exclaimed Eugene. "Oh! you are rashly mistaken. A Frenchman does not marry to obtain gold. It is to protect his wife. Some money is necessary to be assured to her; it is rarely enough to maintain

a carriage and a table. All women like the arrangement — otherwise, why would mothers marry their daughters if they themselves have been unhappy?"

"I tell you what I'll do," said Mr. Manning with prodigious gravity. "As I have told you, I don't like to be the first to launch this new-fangled thing in America. I believe I would be mobbed if I started to go down town among people who knew I had promised my baby girl in marriage to a strange boy that I had only seen once in my life; but you go round and visit some of the other business men of this city, and if you can get them to give their consent to let this custom have a fair trial here, I will sign a paper that will commit my daughter to an engagement to you."

Eugene's face fell. "There will not be time," he said in a pained voice, "as we leave to-morrow. I hoped that a writing could be made out to-day."

"I am not prepared to go that length," said Mr. Manning decidedly. "You see you have sprung this thing on me. You will be coming

to America again — leave it till then, and we'll talk it over. Hello, boy, you're not going to faint, are you?"

Every vestige of color had left Eugene's face. He was not able to analyze his own feelings, but deep down in his heart there was a profound and blank regret that he was to leave America. He had hoped that a definite agreement could be made with the father of little Virgie, which would give an excuse for a return to the city where he had lately experienced the only happy days of his life. If there was to be no agreement, there could be no return.

"No, I never faint," he said; and a sudden reserve came over him. "I have only to apologize for this intrusion and leave you. Monsieur le curé, may I request you to go?"

"Sit down, boy, sit down," said his host kindly. "I want to ask you some questions about yourself."

Eugene resumed his seat, and with the air of a complaisant though suffering martyr responded to the questions put to him.

Something about his coldly courteous an-

swers excited the keenest interest in his interrogator. "See here, my lad," he said at last, "I want you to stay to dinner this evening and meet my wife. Don't say a word to her on the subject of our conversation. I wish that to be a secret between you and me; for to tell the truth, you would only be laughed at if it were to get out. Will you stay? and you, sir?" and he addressed the curé.

Eugene at first recoiled in spirit from this proposal, but he felt himself bound to convey the invitation to the curé; and the delight of the good man at the honor was so extravagant and unbounded that the boy gracefully yielded and consented to stay, only stipulating that a message be sent to the Hardys, who were expecting them to return to partake of their supper.

"I will send my man up," said Mr. Manning. "Will you excuse me while I give him the message, and notify my wife that you are here?"

Eugene sat stiffly in his seat. He looked neither to the right nor to the left, and he

made only monosyllabic replies to the admiring sentences rippling from the mouth of the curé.

When Mr. Manning re-entered the room escorting his wife, Eugene's face brightened somewhat. With a grace and a composure that charmed the lady, he rose and stood aside, while monsieur le curé almost prostrated himself before her. Then he, too, made an inflexion of his slender, supple body, and gazed from under his black, drooping eyelashes at the pretty mother of his desired *fiancée*.

He had never seen her before, and she had never seen him. "Virgie talks a great deal about you," she said. "Thank you, no, I will not take a chair. Dinner is just about to be announced. Why, you are ever so much older than Virgie. I thought you were quite a young boy."

Mr. Manning laughed quietly to himself. He was apparently carrying on communications with the curé in dumb show, but in reality he was listening to his wife's conversation with Eugene.

"I do not feel young," said Eugene soberly, walking beside the lady out to the brilliant splendor of the dining-room; "at times it seems to me that I have lived my whole life."

Mrs. Manning was a plump, phlegmatic woman, and by no means sensitive; yet at the boy's involuntary expression of inward suffering and mental experiences beyond his years, a sympathetic thrill passed over her, and with an expression of pity, she showed him his place at the table.

Eugene caught this expression, and in deep irritation lowered his eyes to his plate. "Why is it," he reflected bitterly, "that since I came among these Americans I catch their candid ways — I reveal everything? I even think in their language. I will begin to reform at once, now that I am to return to my own country;" and a reform he immediately began according to his own standard. It was easier for him to be composed and reserved at this table than at the Hardys. He sat up very straight in his chair, and in an adroit

and delicate manner parried Mrs. Manning's rather curious questions about his mode of life since his grandfather's death.

Rather to her own surprise, as their conversation progressed, Mrs. Manning found that she was telling the boy far more about herself than he was telling her about himself. For one thing, she confessed to him her longing to go to Europe; and Eugene said, "It is our misfortune that you have not yet visited us. May we not look forward to the pleasure of soon seeing you in France?"

"I want to go to Europe next summer and take Virgie," she said.

"May I express the wish that you will honor Châtillon-sur-Loir with a visit?"

"I should like to see something of real French life ever so much," said Mrs. Manning; "and Virgie would be delighted to look you up."

"Then we shall live in the hope of seeing you," said Eugene sweetly, and with a side glance at the curé, who, in blissful unconsciousness of the fact that visitors were being

invited under his humble roof, was taking his soup with some noise, and in a state of utter beatification.

As course after course was served, Eugene, who six months before would have been enchanted by the display of riches about him, became more and more unhappy. He preserved his composure, but it was at the expense of his nerves. Mrs. Manning's voice often sounded distant and hollow in his ears; and once or twice he roused himself with a start, to find that a servant stood at his elbow vainly striving to attract his attention.

What was the matter with him? He was surrounded with things in which he took delight; and in this fine house with these rich people he should feel perfectly at home, yet his dull and inappreciative eye wandered carelessly over the costly dinner-service and the display of exquisite flowers. The servants moving noiselessly about wearied him; and the lights, soft as they were, made his eyes smart with unshed tears; while Mrs. Manning's satin dress, dainty as it was, had less beauty in his

sight than the plain white cotton gown of the sergeant's wife.

She was thinking about him now, that kind woman in the cottage by the Fens. Probably she was just drawing her chair up to the fire in the cosey parlor, and was taking from her workbasket one of the fine new garments that she was making for him.

Perhaps she was murmuring softly to her husband, "How I miss that boy!"

"What will she do when I am gone?" thought Eugene in sudden terror. Something seemed to gripe his heart, and he could have cried out in his distress; yet he controlled himself, and replied in a quiet, clear voice to a question that Mrs. Manning was asking him.

"Yes, madam, I will thank you for some preserved ginger. I am fond of it, and it is some time since I have eaten of it."

The curé ate long and with an admirable appetite, and shortly after dinner showed an amiable inclination to retire into a corner of one of the parlors where a few luxurious arm-chairs stood in inviting solitude.

"Suppose I were to try one of these *fauteuils*," he said in a jocular way to Eugene; and dropping into one, he buried his face in a newspaper which Mr. Manning handed him, and over whose pages, which were almost wholly unintelligible to him, he was soon dozing gently.

Mr. Manning politely ignored his presence; and, being chiefly interested in Eugene, he, quite unintentionally, kept the lad on the rack for some time by asking him further questions about himself and his plans for the future.

The boy could not evade his sharp business-like inquiries as he had done those of his wife. He endured them with the best grace possible, only growing a little white in the effort to control himself. As soon as Mrs. Manning's return from the nursery, where she had been to see her child, gave Eugene an excuse for leaving, he rose gracefully, and looked toward the curé.

"What, going already?" said Mr. Manning. "Mamma, can't this boy say good-by to your little daughter? He thinks a great deal of

her;" and his eyes gleamed mischievously as they rested on Eugene.

"Certainly," said Mrs. Manning. "As a general thing I don't like her to be disturbed after she goes to bed, but we will make an exception in favor of her playfellow."

"Come along, then," said Mr. Manning; and he ran up-stairs more nimbly than Eugene, and waited for him at the top of the staircase.

"Here we are," he said briskly; and he opened the door of a dimly lighted room. "Are you asleep, pet?"

"No, papa," said Virgie sleepily; and Eugene saw her pretty head rising from a crib.

"Where is nurse?" asked Mr. Manning, advancing to the crib.

"Gone down-stairs, cross old thing," said Virgie. "Have you brought your little girl a present, papa?"

"No," said her father with a laugh. "I have brought a boy that wants to say good-by to you. He is going away. Do you know who it is?"

"'Course I do," said Virgie, who was clearly

in a bad temper; "it's that cross boy Eugene. Is he going to his old remperor?"

Eugene felt as if he were suffocating. He had always fancied that he did not like this little American girl, that he only endured her; and he had considered it a great condescension on his part that he should include her in the childish stroke of diplomacy by which he proposed to make the way clear for a return to America. Now he saw that he had been mistaken. He loved the small child next to Mrs. Hardy and the sergeant, and her indifference cut him to the heart.

"Little one," he said resentfully, as he stepped nearer, "you may never see me again."

"Then Virgie will be glad," said the child, pouting out her lips at him; "once you sweeped the ground with me."

Mr. Manning was convulsed with amusement at the calmly vindictive attitude of his youthful daughter, and waited attentively for Eugene's next sentence.

"Shall I send you a present from France?" he asked at last.

"No; Virgie hates French dolls."

"Across the sea," said Eugene mournfully, "I shall soon forget you; for I shall have boys to play with and you are but a girl."

"When you go 'way, Eugene," replied Virgie in a cool and impassive manner, "I'll frow all the stones in the park at the remperor."

This shaft did not excite his anger as she thought it would; so she continued, cautiously feeling her way, for she was afraid of him when he lost his temper. "An' maybe I'll kill the king, an' the other pussies, an' the mister policeman, an' maybe I'll come an' kill you."

Her sweet and silly defiance did not provoke the boy, and she lashed her childish imagination for another taunt. "If Virgie had a gun," she murmured, "a big, big gun, I guess she'd shoot you now."

Eugene smiled sadly, and yet his eyes were full of tears. Was he going to cry before this child and the man who was silently regarding him? The thought filled him with dismay; and he turned on his heel, and abruptly went toward the door.

"Oh, oh!" squealed Virgie dismally, "the pretty buttons! come back, I want to see them!"

Her volatile, childish fancy had been taken with the glitter of some new buttons on Eugene's coat; and hastily wiping his eyes, he returned to her, and before Mr. Manning could prevent him, he had gallantly twisted a button from its place, and put it in the child's hand.

"Thank you, Eugene, just dreffully," she said in delight; and she sprang up in her crib, clasping her new treasure firmly in one hand, while she extended the other toward him. "Good-by, Virgie won't hurt the remperor; here's a present for you;" and she caught up a legless, armless doll lying on her dainty pillow.

Eugene went to her, and she stuffed it in his pocket. Then she yawned sleepily, put her pink lips to his ear, and murmured, "Good-by, Eugene, be a good girl;" and dropping down on her pillow was asleep before they had fairly left the room.

Ten minutes later Eugene and the priest were walking quietly up the avenue in the direction of the Hardys' house, and Mr. Manning and his wife sat talking together with amused faces.

"What do you make of that boy?" he asked.

"I don't make much of him," she replied. "He seems a polite little cynic."

"He is more than that," said Mr. Manning sagely. "If he were going to stay in this country, I would do something for him."

CHAPTER XI.

THAT WOMAN.

MRS. HARDY was afraid that Eugene was going to be ill. Several times while giving her an account of his visit to the Mannings he relapsed into long, troubled silences.

As soon as he had finished his recital she sent him to bed, and shortly afterwards she came and stood over him with a medicine bottle in her hand.

He asked no questions; and after quickly taking what she gave him, he kissed her hand, and closing his eyes, fell into a troubled sleep.

In the morning he seemed more cheerful, but he still acted like a boy in a dream; and the sergeant muttered, "That lad doesn't hear more than half of what is said to him. He's in a dead worry about this business of going away. Now I must have a few last words with the priest. Come out into the garden, mussoo, it's

a fine morning:" and he took his guest out-of-doors.

"Now, look here, sir," he said firmly, and he seized a button on the priest's cassock, "this is your last day in Boston; and I want to tell you before you take that boy to France, that you're to consider yourself as free as air to send him back at any time it suits you and him, for I guess his grand-uncle isn't going to interfere much with him."

The curé hardly understood a word of what the sergeant said, and the worthy man did not expect that he would. The sergeant had formulated a system about conversing with the curé. The first time he uttered sentences he rattled them off in any way just to accustom the foreigner to the sound of the words. The next time he repeated them slowly, the third time more slowly, and with a liberal illustration of gestures in order to make his meaning entirely plain.

Therefore, when the curé had heard a trio of these sentences, accompanied by a far-away fling of his host's hand to denote France, a

nearer one for Boston, and a comprehensive sweep through the air to indicate freedom of action, he understood perfectly, and nodded his acquiescence and approval of the plan.

"But I think he weel not return," he said.

"You don't know anything about it," said the sergeant. "He is a queer lad; and like most young fellows, and some old ones, he does what you don't think he will do, and what you think he will do, he won't."

"Pardon," said the curé.

"I can't make you see that," said the sergeant decidedly, "because there isn't any scope for gestures, so we'll let it pass. Now, I want to tell you that I have a nest-egg, and my wife has expectations, or rather a surety from a rich aunt, so the boy wouldn't suffer if he came back. We could educate him like a gentleman."

"Eggs," exclaimed the curé in delight as a familiar word broke upon his ear in the first utterance of a sentence. "Hens lay eggs."

"Yes," said the sergeant, "hens and eggs go together; but good gracious, you've got me off

the track, and if I go to explain my meaning to you, you'll get all tangled up in a chicken-coop. Forget it, mussoo."

"Forget eggs; no, I remembare," said the curé reproachfully.

"I guess I'll have to dispose of that," said the sergeant desperately. "What did I want to use the old expression for? Hens are useful creatures;" and to expedite matters he began to flap his arms and cluck, and then brought his hands near the ground to measure off the dimensions of a hen of respectable appearance.

"Eggs are good for eating," said the curé amiably.

"Yes, fine," said the sergeant; and he drew a handful of silver from his pocket. "Do you see that?"

"Yes, yes."

"Money — good stuff to have — well, I've a lot of it — heaps;" and he began to build an airy pyramid on the ground. "Savings, you know, and a little I had left me by my parents — enough to educate a boy."

"Yes, I comprehend," said the curé, de-

lighted beyond measure at his own keenness; "you sell eggs, you make money. One does it in France. One sells all things."

"All right," said the sergeant philosophically. "Have me sell eggs or anything you like, the money is there, anyway, and the boy is welcome to it. Hello, here he is. Come here, lad, and dash this off to your protector. You are now in America, you start for France in a few hours; you may stay there six weeks, or six months, or six years, or all your life; but unless you hear from us that we have forgotten you or changed our minds, you're at liberty to come here and live with us at any time. Do you understand that?"

"I do," said Eugene; "and I thank you."

While he was talking to the curé, the sergeant sighed heavily, and went sauntering down the walk to the gate, and out through it to the park. He was not as sanguine as his wife about Eugene's reluctance to leave them, and he could not bear to remain at home on this the last day of his stay with them.

When he returned for dinner in the middle of the day he exerted himself to be cheerful; but he disappeared immediately afterward, and did not come back until late in the afternoon, in time to take Eugene and the priest to the train.

All day long Eugene had followed Mrs. Hardy about the house, waiting on her in a quiet and unobtrusive way, but saying very little. He did not understand her; but she understood him perfectly, and she saw that as yet there was no flagging in his resolve to go to France.

He wondered that this woman, who professed to love him so much and who cried so easily, had not yet, as far as he had known, shed a tear over his departure. She did not even break down when they reached the station, and saw before them the long line of cars on which he was to be whirled away from her.

Eugene shuddered at the sight, and clung convulsively to her hand. "Do you feel that you ought not to go?" she asked quietly.

"No, no," said the boy in a tortured voice. "I only feel it horrible to go; yet it is for the best, and it is duty. I shall come back some day."

"Wife," said the sergeant inexorably, "it is time for them to get on board the train. Good-by, son."

"Good-by," said Eugene, shaking hands with him; "you have been good to me. I thank you" — and here his voice failed him, and he groped blindly for Mrs. Hardy.

When he felt her arms around him, he whispered three words in her ear — the words she had longed to hear, and that he had never given her until now.

"I love you," he breathed with his eager lips against her cheek; and then he added with a heartbroken sigh, "if I were not a beggar I should have stayed with you; but I am proud" — here he broke off, and without looking at her again, rushed into the car and took his seat.

The curé followed him slowly and cautiously, put in one of his capacious pockets the

checks and tickets that the sergeant handed to him; then the conductor shouted, the crowd of people stepped back, and the train moved off.

Eugene remained motionless and silent in his corner of the seat. He did not speak until they reached the Fall River station, and there he contented himself with monosyllabic replies to the curé's remarks.

Upon arriving on the steamer the curé sauntered wonderingly about, taking in the details of the life on board this floating palace. He would want to describe it accurately upon reaching home, for he knew that the peasants of Châtillon-sur-Loir were capable of taking in accounts of greater wonders than these.

Eugene had gone immediately to bed. After an hour or two the curé followed him. Before turning into his berth for the night, he looked at the one above him. The boy lay with his arm over his face. Probably he had been asleep for some time.

Being tired, and having a mind at peace

with himself and the world, the priest slept soundly and happily until shortly after daybreak. Then he got up; and after gazing through his small window at the red ball of the sun, he raised his eyes to the upper berth where he supposed Eugene was still sleeping.

To his surprise and distress the lad was crouched in a corner, his limbs convulsed, his face rigid, and his hands tightly clasped in the bedclothes.

"How now, little one — art thou having a fit?" exclaimed the priest in his own language. "Let me dash some water in thy face. Oh, this is pitiful!"

Eugene stretched out his hand in a forbidding way, but did not reply to him.

"Thou art having a spasm," said the priest. "I am sure of it. Let me seek a doctor. Oh! what is the matter with thee?"

"It is that woman," gasped Eugene. "Oh! I cannot endure it."

"A woman!" repeated the priest, inspecting the narrow dimensions of their room in great amazement; "there is no woman here."

"It is that woman yonder, monsieur le curé," said Eugene respectfully, and yet with restrained anger; "there is but one woman that I consider — the one who has been so peerless for me. Oh! I wish to see her. I wish to see her;" and he flung himself about his berth in a paroxysm of regret and passion.

"Poor little one," said the priest, "hast thou been suffering all through the long night?"

"I have not slept," said Eugene miserably. "I have sat up and thought of many things. I wish to go back. I cannot endure this."

"I will be a mother to thee," said the priest soothingly; "and thou canst write to that good woman."

"She will not care for letters," exclaimed Eugene. "She wishes me, and I wish her. When I lie down at night she wishes me happy dreams. I did not know that I cared for it until last night when she was not here. I must go back to her. I *shall* go back;" and he surveyed his companion in open defiance.

The priest was puzzled. "Dost thou desire to remain always in this country?" he said.

"Yes," Eugene returned with sudden coolness. "If that woman should die, possibly I might return to France. While she lives I will stay with her."

"Thou art an obstinate child," muttered the curé to himself, "and I believe thee. Neither the church nor the world restrains the de Vargas. They are unruly, like the wild boars." Then he said aloud, — "What dost thou propose to do?"

"To return now," cried Eugene, flinging up his head, "now, monsieur le curé. With your permission I will go back — I will say to her I am sorry for the disturbances I have made you. In future I shall try to be more peaceful."

"My life will be less lively without thee," observed the curé thoughtfully; "and were I alone concerned thou wouldst freely have my consent to remain, but thy grand-uncle" —

"Tell him," said Eugene with bent brows and flashing eyes, "tell him that he has no authority over me. That I refuse the meagre sum that he would dole out to me. In this

country I will learn how to support myself; yet also tell him that since I love that woman I hate him less."

"Thou art a fiery lad," murmured the curé with resignation. "If thy grand-uncle were a de Vargas I would need to soften that message."

"Have I your permission to return?" asked Eugene urgently.

"Thou hast. Of what use would it be to withhold it?" said the curé frankly.

"Of no use," replied the boy with a relieved gesture; "for this morning I find myself capable of running away. As soon as we arrive in New York I will leave you;" and a bright smile stole over his face.

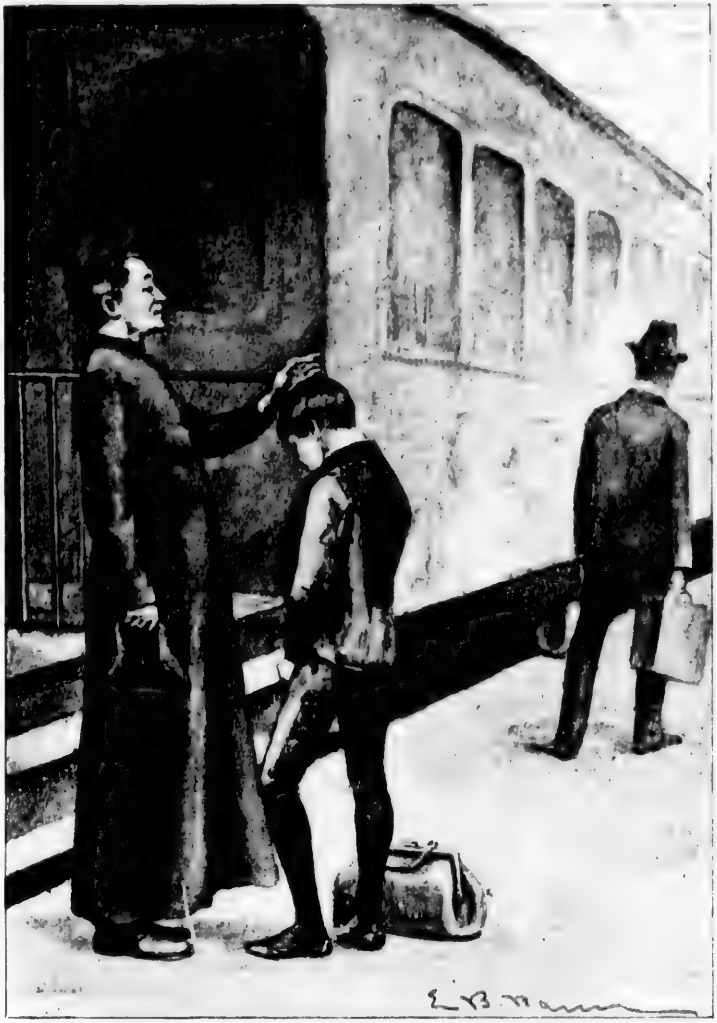
The curé seized his black hat, and went for a stroll on the deck, where he was a few minutes later joined by a new Eugene, — a happy, contented boy, who seized his hand, and begged forgiveness for the determined manner in which he had just addressed him.

"Droll little lad," said the priest, "I wonder what thy life will be? I say to thee as

that good man said yesterday, thou hast a friend in me away in France. My cottage door will always be open to thee."

Eugene pressed one of the curé's hands in both of his, while tears stood in his eyes. Then they went below to have breakfast; and while the boy was eating and drinking in a dainty, half-famished way, the curé cast frequent and curious glances at him. A transformation had certainly been effected in the lad. He was no longer buried in unhappy reserve. His face was glowing; and he looked often and fearlessly at his companion, and smiled, as if some of the affection that he felt for his adopted mother was shed upon every one that had come within the circle of her influence.

When they steamed into New York Harbor, the curé gazed about him in wonder and admiration. Eugene, plunged in a delicious revery, took no notice of the lofty buildings, the crowded wharves, and the maze of shipping, but stood close to the curé, and stared directly in front of him in intense abstraction of mind.



The Curé slowly pronounced a Blessing.

After they landed, they had several hours of tiresome quest, — first in search of the steamer that was to take the curé to Havre, then to find a railway station from which Eugene could be sent back to Boston. The dreamy boy and the foreign man were directed and informed, and redirected and reinformed; and some hours elapsed before the curé had deposited his bag on the steamer, and had finally and repeatedly been assured that the trains from the station in which he was then standing certainly did run to Boston, and certainly would carry the boy there as speedily as steam could take him.

"Go in, little one — into the carriage and take thy seat," said the curé in an agony of excitement. "Oh! never did I see such a place as this city. My head spins; it is worse than Paris!"

"I will go in," said Eugene; "but first your blessing, monsieur le curé; for I no longer hate the priesthood, and say if you will that you do not blame me."

The curé suddenly became calm. An angelic smile overspread his face; and as Eugene

drew his cap from his head, the man laid his hands on his smooth dark hair, and slowly pronounced a blessing.

"*Au nom de Dieu,*" Eugene murmured after him; then he flung himself in the curé's arms, and embraced him heartily.

"We shall meet again, little one," said the curé, "we shall meet again;" and the last object that the boy's eyes rested on as his train pulled slowly out of the station was the tall black figure of the priest standing a little back from the crowd, his black hat in his hand, his finger pointing solemnly upward from the noise and babel of the city.

Eugene sat very quiet and still in his seat. His heart was sore at the parting from the curé, which was like the snapping of the last link that bound him to his native land; and yet it was singing like a bird at the prospect of his speedy reunion with his foster-parents. He closed his happy eyes; and in a very few minutes he had fallen sound asleep, with a smile on his face that made every passer-by look at him in amusement.

The curé knew that Eugene, who had at different times in his life spent many months in Paris, would be quite able to look out for himself on reaching the city that had been his home for so many months. He would have been more convinced of this had he seen the adroit way in which the boy slipped between the throng of people when he reached Boston. He took a short cut to the street corner where he would find a car, and in a very short time his eye singled out the desired one from a number that were approaching. He sprang on it, and was borne swiftly away from the streets toward the large park which had become the dearest spot on earth to him.

Soon he saw against the western sky the tall straight poplars of the Boylston-street entrance; and springing from the car as it stopped on a corner, he ran, for he was too much agitated to walk, in the direction of the cottage.

"Ah, that woman, that woman," he kept repeating to himself; "but she will be glad to see me."

Though it was quite dark, there were no lights in the windows.

"She is absent," he said: "but I will not grieve, for she will return."

He hurried up the garden-path, and tried to turn the handle of the front door. "Ah, it is locked — the back one also, I suppose;" and he trotted cheerfully to the rear of the house.

"They are away," he said, when he found he could not gain entrance there; "and some boys would be afraid. I shall not be;" and he lifted his face up proudly to the overcast sky, "not even if they stay all night. I will look into my charming room;" and he shaded his eyes with his hands, and peered into one of the back rooms on the ground floor. Then he tried to raise the window with his hand. "Why, it is open," he said delightedly; "I can get in. Why did that woman leave open this window?"

Eugene crawled in, and walked through the house seeking matches, and lighting the gas everywhere he went to make the rooms cheerful for the return of the sergeant and his wife. However, they did not appear, though seven o'clock came, then eight, and finally

nine. Only the two cats came home, springing in through the open window, and greeting him with demure expressions of pleasure.

The boy fed and caressed them; and then, followed by the pair who were in a state of silent satisfaction, he sat down by his window, and resting his elbows on the window-sill, looked out across the garden into the street. It was very quiet. The Hardys had no near neighbors, and only at rare intervals did anyone pass, yet Eugene was not afraid.

"I am happy — happy," he murmured, pressing his face against the tortoiseshell fur of one of the cats. "I cannot be lonely unless she stays a long, long time. Probably they are to remain all night. It must be a visit to the aunt. Come in, pussy. I must close the window, for it is cold."

The cat, however, did not wish him to close it. With symptoms of great excitement she rubbed herself back and forth against his arms, and acted as if she were trying to attract his attention to the other cat, who had sprung boldly out on one of the flower-beds.

Eugene placed one hand on the window-sill, and jumped out after her. "What is the matter, Dodo?" he said.

The night was very dark, and it had begun to rain. The electric light, however, shone on this part of the garden, and he could see a small dark creature moving slowly along the fence.

"That must be one of the park cats," said Eugene — "not the king, for there is no white on it. Why, it is his cham. What are you doing here, Squirrel, and why do you move so slowly?"

With a sharp almost human cry of pain, the little dark animal dropped from the fence to the ground.

"What is wrong with you?" said Eugene as he walked along beside him.

The cat paused an instant to give him a look of recognition, then, with a piteous mew, continued his journey to the house. On reaching Eugene's window the animal lifted his head beseechingly.

"Thou wishest to go in, small park cat,"

said Eugene, dropping into French; "well, spring for it. I permit thee, though it is late for a call."

The cat gathered his limbs together, and, with something between a mew of gratitude and a wail of pain, managed to attain to the window-ledge.

"Why, thou art bleeding," said Eugene in dismay, as he noticed red drops on the light wood. "Unfortunate animal, have the dogs been at thee?" and he hurried in after the cat, and bent over him as he lay on the floor exhausted by his journey to the house.

The cat did not resent the touch of his gentle fingers; and Eugene soon discovered the extent of his injuries, and made a bandage to hold together the torn skin. Immediately, however, on being released, Squirrel signified his wish to leave the room. Eugene opened the door, and followed him out through the hall to Mrs. Hardy's room.

"Is not this devotion!" exclaimed the boy, throwing out his hands with a gesture of admiration. "Sick and wounded, and appar-

ently about to die, the faithful creature would be in the home of his mistress. Poor pussy, I compassionate thee;" and slipping off his jacket the boy laid it on the bed, and lifted the cat on it.

"Thy mistress is away. I do not know when she will return," he said, leaning over the suffering creature, and speaking in exquisitely soft and sympathetic tones; "but if she were here she would stroke thy mangled fur, and say kindly, 'Courage, little cat, thy sufferings will soon be over;' and for her sake I put my hand on thy head, and I will sit by thee till thou art no more. Perhaps, though, thou wouldst like some milk;" and he ran quickly to the kitchen, and brought back some cream in a saucer.

The dying cat refused to take it; so the boy smeared some on his lips, and then continued his compassionate sentences. Occasionally, in response to his remarks to the effect that death overtakes all, that there is but one lot for king, pauper, or dumb beast, the animal would return a plaintive mew. At last the

unfortunate Squirrel's sufferings were over. He gave one gasp, like a dying child, then lay quite still.

"I cannot cry, little cat," said Eugene softly, wrapping the coat around him, and tiptoeing his way back to his room; "but I, nevertheless, grieve for thee. Now what is to be done? That dear woman evidently does not return to-night;" and he shivered, and glanced over his shoulder. "I am not afraid, and yet the house is desolate."

For some time he stood with his head on his breast, then he raised it with a sudden air of decision. "I will go to see the king. He, too, will be sorrowing on account of the absence of his friend."

He buttoned round him a warm overcoat, put out the light in his room, and shut in it the two old cats who had been mewing dismally about him ever since their suffering comrade had arrived. Then, carrying the body of the unlucky Squirrel in his arms, he wended his way to the park.

King Boozy was watching, and not sleep-

ing. All through the evening he had been wandering to and fro under the trees, awaiting the arrival of the absent Squirrel before he could go to sleep. On account of the darkness and rain of the night not many persons passed through the park; and of those who took the walk under the poplars not one suspected the eager scrutiny of the pair of eyes belonging to the little animal crouching beneath the leaves — not one but Eugene. He knew that the cat was there, and whistled softly to him.

The king was at his side in an instant, and there was no need for Eugene to tell him what had happened. He knew at once, and in dumb sorrow trotted beside the boy to his home in the underbrush.

"There he is, Boozy," said Eugene, laying the cat carefully on the ground, and spreading open the coat. "I thought it better for thee to know. Thou wilt not cry? No, that is a good, sensible cat."

The king crept close to his dead friend, and examined him closely and affectionately, paus-

ing every few minutes to look up at Eugene as if to say, "Will he not revive?"

The boy bent over him in the darkness. "No, Boozy," he said, "thou canst not bring him back. Poor little cat, he has lived his day, and dogs or cruel boys have killed him. And now I must return to the house, for it is chilly here, but first I must tell thee something;" and he caught the creature to him in a tumult of affection. "Listen, till I tell thee that I have been away, and that I have come back a new boy. I do not know what has caused the change in me; but my heart feels no longer hard and cold, but soft, quite soft, like thy fur. I do not believe all that these grown people tell me; but I believe many things, and I think that having lived longer they may know a little more than I do. I must be patient and learn; and that woman, that woman — I love her, and she shall be my mother! Ah, Boozy," and the boy sprang to his feet, and lifted his cap reverently from his head, "I shall be a son to her. I shall stay in this new, free country as long as she lives.

She says that I must not hate England, and I will not hate it. She says that I must endure the republic in France, and I will do that. If she will guide me I will follow her, now that I know that women are good and do not deceive. My beloved grandfather did not understand. He did not know the sergeant's wife. *Au revoir*, little cat: I must go back to the house lest she possibly arrive and find me absent. Wilt thou come with me?"

No, the cat did not wish to accompany him. Upon being released from Eugene's arms he crept to the coat, and the last glimpse that the boy had of him as he reluctantly went away was of the king sitting in dignified sorrow beside the body of his friend.

CHAPTER XII.

THE RETURN.

On the evening that Eugene left Boston, Mrs. Hardy had received a telegram announcing the serious illness of her aunt; and accompanied by her husband she had at once left her home to go and see her. They were away a day and two nights, and early on the morning of the next day they returned home.

They were a very quiet couple as they drew near the cottage. "It seems as if we had been to a funeral," said the sergeant lugubriously, "though it looks now as if your aunt might get well. I wish that you had never seen that boy, Bess. We have got to miss him tremendously about the house."

"I believe you feel worse about his going away than I do," said Mrs. Hardy. "I know, I just know, Stephen, that he will come back. He isn't fitted for that narrow French life,

and you know he has been brought up to despise priests. Now, if he had been going to a city like this, or to any one that liked him" —

"Oh! he'll get used to it," said the sergeant, "and boys forget."

"Some boys do — Eugene won't," said Mrs. Hardy. "I know him better than you do, Stephen."

While they were talking, their cab stopped in front of their own door. The sergeant got out first, and taking a key from his pocket he inserted it in the lock. After he had swung open the door, and let his wife pass in, he sauntered around the garden, carrying on a half-growling soliloquy with himself. He was slightly out of temper, and he did not know what he wanted.

The clouds of the night had all blown away, and the morning was bright and cheerful. The frost that for some days had held the garden-beds in its grasp had relaxed, and they were now soft and muddy.

"Hello," said the sergeant, suddenly pausing in his walk, "some young rascal has been

tramping over this marigold-bed by Eugene's window — just about the size of his foot too. Why, what's that?" and he wrinkled his eyebrows as his eyes fell on the blood-stains on the sill. "There's something wrong here. I'll investigate. If I'm not a bad guesser some one has been getting in this window. I told Bess she ought not to leave it open; but she would do it, and she didn't expect the boy to come back either. Just a woman's foolishness."

He strode quietly up to the window, and tried to look in. The blind was down so he could not do it; therefore he put his hands on the sash, and softly raised it.

More softly than he had raised it he put it down, and his amazed and discontented expression vanished instantaneously. His lips formed themselves into an exclamation of surprise; and uttering a long, low whistle, he nimbly picked his way over the muddy paths back to the front of the house.

"Hello, Bess dear," he said, saluting her with an affectionate tap on the shoulder as she

whisked into view with a duster in her hand, "you're the prettiest woman I ever saw."

"Stephen, are you crazy?" she said rather pettishly; "and why didn't you wipe your feet? You are tracking up my clean hall."

"You're out of sorts, Bess; you find the house lonely without the boy."

She hung her head without speaking. She had started out with the intention of bearing her loss bravely while it should last, and she was not yet willing to give in.

"I'm hungry," said the sergeant unexpectedly; "can't I have some more breakfast?"

In a trice her white head was held up again. "Why, Stephen, you had your breakfast at the railway station."

"Well, suppose I did — can't I have some more?"

"Oh! certainly, if you wish it," she returned, eying him in a kind of uneasy surprise; "but you ate so much."

"It's pretty hard if a man can't have all he wants to eat in his own house," said the sergeant, and then he began to sing, —

"I can't get 'em up,
I can't get 'em up,
I can't get 'em up in the morning.
I can't get 'em up,
I can't get 'em up,
I can't get 'em up at all."

Mrs. Hardy stared at him. She did not in the least understand this sudden jocularity of mood.

The sergeant, nothing daunted by her expression, allowed his spirits to rise higher and higher, and continued, —

"The captain's worse than the sergeant;
The sergeant's worse than the corp'ral;
The corp'ral's worse than the private;
But the major's the worst of all."

"Stephen," said Mrs. Hardy tearfully, "I don't think it's kind of you to sing that."

"Why not, my dear? why not?"

"Because — you know why."

"Because I used to sing it every morning when the boy was here. Well, I just want to remind you of him, to keep you from forgetting, as it were. You think he is coming back, don't you?"

"Ye-e-s," and she reluctantly uttered the

word; "but, O Stephen! I don't want to wait."

"It isn't necessary. You sha'n't wait," vociferated the sergeant, roaming about the room.

Mrs. Hardy was just about to lose her composure, and throw herself miserably into a chair; but at his words a puzzled, almost fearful, expression came over her face, and in tremulous haste she hurried to the pantry, and busied herself in preparing the extra meal that he had demanded.

"His grandfather died in a lunatic asylum," she murmured, as her shaking hand dropped tea instead of coffee into the coffee-pot. "Is it possible that his mind is getting affected? He sha'n't be worried into it, anyway," she went on, bravely dashing aside a tear; and her fingers fairly flew, as she cut slices of cold meat and buttered some rolls. "He shall have what he wants."

In a very few minutes the sergeant was bidden to seat himself before his second breakfast. "Now call the boy," he exclaimed, "as you always do before we get seated."

"My dear husband, let us not refer to him," said Mrs. Hardy very slowly and soothingly; "don't you know he is not here?"

"Let's go through the form, anyway," said the sergeant, smiting the table until the dishes rattled. "Let's go through with it for the sake of old times and the times that are to come;" and leaping up he took her hand in his, and jogged merrily down the hall.

"I'll go with you, Stephen," said his wife, with quiet yet increasing uneasiness; "but don't hurry, there's plenty of time."

"Yes, there's plenty of time," whispered her husband, and to her further anxiety he became mysterious and subdued; "hush, now, if he was here we might wake him;" and he tiptoed cautiously into the room.

Mrs. Hardy kept close to his side, her troubled attention riveted on him, until she stumbled over a pair of muddy boots.

Then she lifted up her eyes. There on the back of a chair was a coat with brass buttons, and there in the white bed was a sleeping boy.

With a cry like that of a mother-bird kept from her young she flew to the bed, and the released and misunderstood sergeant now left to his own devices capered clumsily about the room.

When Eugene waked from sleep, and saw the white head and eager face of his adopted mother bending over him, his first drowsy exclamations were in French; then he broke into English. "Mrs. Hardy," he cried, "I was dreaming of you;" and he raised himself, and threw his arms around her neck.

The sergeant heard his wife's exclamation, "My treasure! I knew you would come back." And he also heard Eugene's clear, ringing sentence, "Mother! mother! I have not said it before, except to the king of the park, but I will call you that now to all the world!" At this latter assurance the sergeant's capering ceased, and he walked soberly to the window.

"Bother these women, they are always crying," he observed with what he meant to be an infinity of pity and indulgence. Then he

drew his handkerchief from his pocket, and gently touched up the corners of his eyes. A minute later he was just about to turn around, when he found it necessary to go through the same operation again. For a number of times his handkerchief went from his pocket to his eyes, until he said with impatience, "I don't care if they do see me;" and marched to the bed.

"Son," he remarked, "I am glad to see you back."

Eugene was sitting up in the bed, looking slimmer than ever in his white nightgown. "Will you take me for your child?" he asked wistfully. "If you will, though I am but a pauper, I shall feel like a prince."

"We'll take you," said the sergeant, winking rapidly, "prince or pauper or whatever you like to be."

"I was never happy until I came to you," said Eugene; "and I shall never be happy away from you — I feel that."

"Boy," said the sergeant, "it isn't your fault that you were a bit cantankerous. You were

brought up wrong. I wonder the Lord lets some people have children. They don't know how to train 'em, and yet it's a hard thing to do. I hear a lot of talk nowadays about the perfectibility of human nature, but I don't see much of it in my profession. Show me a baby boy, and I say there's a bad one. Show me a baby girl, and I say there's one not quite so bad. They've got to be drilled. Before I got to be as good even as I am now, my old father had to wallop me, and my mother had to pray and cry over me without ceasing. We're born bad — that's my doctrine; and we're put here to improve our natures, so that we may be fit to live in another world by and by."

"I like those words," said Eugene thoughtfully; "and I believe them now, though once I would not have thought there was truth in them."

"I guess they're sound," said the sergeant; "and though we're not perfect, wife and I, we'll try to teach you a few good things."

"Oh! I have so much to tell you," said Eugene, kissing Mrs. Hardy's hands, and folding

them to his breast, "so much. It seems a year since I left. I must tell you of New York, and how the poor curé was disturbed."

"Get up and dress," said the sergeant, "and come outside and talk to us. There's some breakfast for you there. I looked out for that," and putting his arm around his wife's waist he drew her from the room.

"I've just fifteen minutes before I go to the park," he cried, "I hope the little fellow will hurry."

"He will," said Mrs. Hardy. "Oh, thank God that we have him back again!"

"There's a lot of comfort in children," said the sergeant, "if you take them the right way; and I often wonder what the state of mind of real parents is like when a body can get so fond of children that don't belong to him. Bess, we'll try to bring that bairn up in the right way, and when we're gone we won't feel that we've left no one behind us in the world."

. . . . . .

It is yet rather early in the day to predict Eugene's future, as he has only been a few months with the Hardys.

He is still a pale, elegant lad with courteous manners, and he enjoys to the full the country life that the Hardys are now living; for the aunt died soon after his return, and left to his adopted parents a comfortable house situated some miles out of Boston.

The sergeant has resigned from the police force, and the city cares for the cats; though every week the sergeant and Eugene ride in, the former on a stately chestnut horse, and the latter on a beautiful pony, to pay a visit to the park, where they are eagerly welcomed by the king and his subjects.

On these weekly visits Eugene often calls on the Mannings, and is rapturously welcomed by Virgie; but whether he goes there or not, he never fails to seek the spot where the bust of John Boyle O'Reilly looks toward the city. He always remains before it for a long time. His childish love for his emperor will never die away; but it is broadening now, and he is tak-

ing into his affections the heroes of his adopted country.

The sergeant invariably takes him a round of the public buildings and monuments of the city. Eugene's face flashes as he follows the sergeant's lead, and reins in his black pony near the colossal statue of Washington on his horse, or gazes at the noble, manly Lincoln standing over the freed slave. He loves also the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument on the Common, where his favorite figure is the Federal infantryman standing at ease.

The sergeant likes best the figure of peace on this monument, — the woman bearing the olive-branch, and having her eyes toward the South.

One day not long ago, when they were standing before this monument, Eugene said, "I may not be a soldier when I am grown up; but if this country should need me, I will serve it till I die."

"That's right," observed the sergeant, "if you are a good honest citizen, respecting yourself and the rights of others, and trying to keep a clear record, you'll be doing as good service

in the world as if you were running about with a sword or a gun in your hand to pick a quarrel."

"But suppose one just *had* to fight," said the boy earnestly, "suppose one could not get out of it."

"Get out of it, get out of it," said the sergeant with a chuckle, "and always get out of it; but if you can't, and just *have* to fight, as you say, then fight well."

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